Commentary

VOLUME EIGHTY-ONE • NUMBER FOUR • APRIL 1986

How Not to Occupy the West Bank

Menahem Milson

Therefore Choose Death?

Paul S. Appelbaum and Joel Klein

Ethiopia: The Communist Uses of Famine

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A Russian Writer's Jewish Fate

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Indian Art—and Ours

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Why Computers Can't Be Poets

William Barrett

Books in Review: Angelo M. Codevilla / Daniel Casse / Robert Alter / J. Kirby Simon / Richard John Neuhaus

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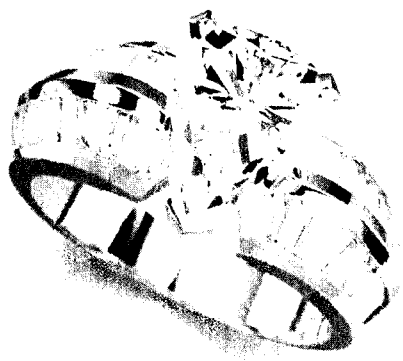

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Letters from Readers

The Black-Jewish Split

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Glenn C. Loury's ascription of "profoundly anti-Western" political views to America's black political and intellectual elite ["Behind the Black-Jewish Split," January] regrettably coincides with COMMENTARY's more general effort to consign the Left-liberal intellectual elite to the anti-Western camp. This argument, and Mr. Loury's perhaps inadvertent contribution to it, pays a curious compliment to the authoritarian Left by accepting its most basic assumptions while at the same time disclosing a certain carelessness about Western values by ignoring their destruction at the hands of anti-democratic terrorists. Mr. Loury himself seems to know better.

Mr. Loury writes of a "still developing Pan-African conception of black national identity" that is "embraced by black intellectual elites." He judiciously mentions no names. In fact, while Pan-Africanist convictions can be found among some black intellectuals, it is difficult to apply the label to anyone of much prominence. (Even so disenchanted a writer as James Baldwin is thoroughly rooted in Western literary traditions and is in no way a Pan-Africanist.) And among more mainstream black writers, such as sociologist William Julius Wilson, novelists David Bradley and Alice Walker, and economist Thomas Sowell, Pan-Africanist sentiments are "still developing" in much the same sense that neo-Nazi sentiments are "still developing" on the Right: present to be sure, and growing perhaps, but far from significant.

It is in the political rather than the intellectual arena that Mr. Loury's fears originate. The rise of Louis Farrakhan and, to a lesser extent, Jesse Jackson can be taken as a sign that what Mr. Loury calls a "supranational Third World identity" is taking root among American blacks. But clearly Farrakhan and Jackson's stature is due to their ability to rally the black rank and file to their cause and not to any intellectual endeavors, much less achievements. This, of course, turns upside-down Mr. Loury's thesis that black elites are foisting their anti-Western beliefs on pro-Western black Americans. If Jackson and Farrakhan's personal popularity among blacks springs from a sentiment which "regards with serious doubt the most cherished of Western political values," then Mr. Loury's own contention that such an ideology is "foreign to the everyday experience and commonplace aspirations of rank-and-file black people" is very much in doubt. If the appeal of Jackson and Farrakhan is so foreign, why are they so popular? If their appeal is not so foreign, then perhaps it is not fundamentally anti-Western, as Mr. Loury alleges.

Mr. Loury is in the unenviable position of arguing that it is black people, not just black leaders, who are out of touch with Western values. The black community, he implies, confirmed its antipathy for Western "civilization" by overwhelmingly and enthusiastically supporting Jesse Jackson. Presumably, it is now up to the more enlightened white community, which voted predominantly for Ronald Reagan, and conservative intellectuals to set black people straight. This argument steers perilously close to that of former (and perhaps not so former) white supremacists such as James J. Kilpatrick and Jesse Helms whose public careers have been built on the belief that black folk must come to see the wisdom of the white man's ways. Mr. Loury—unlike some neoconservatives—has no desire to keep such company, but his argument gives him little choice.

An alternative view is implicit in Mr. Loury's own argument. It is a view, moreover, that is less condescending about the political wisdom of American blacks and more supportive of Western values in general. Mr. Loury acknowledges that the development of anti-Western feeling "is abetted by apartheid abroad." This is true to the extent that Western values are said to be compatible with apartheid. South Africa's Prime Minister P.W. Botha and Farrakhan's sidekick Kwame Toure (a/k/a Stokely Carmichael) would agree that they are completely compatible. Mr. Loury, as a defender of Western values, no doubt rejects this spurious equation made by anti-democratic forces —whether Pan-African or Pan-Afrikaner.

But Mr. Loury shies away from pursuing the implications of the

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point. South Africa has in the past fourteen months galvanized American blacks as no other issue has in years. To be sure, South Africa's abuse of Western values has driven some blacks to espouse anti-Western feelings. The mainstream of the anti-apartheid movement, though, has been animated by a defense of Western values. The movement has insisted, not on revolution, not on Pan-Africanism, but on simple democratic freedoms: that blacks in South Africa be granted the right to assemble peacefully, speak freely, live where they want, not be deprived of their property by the state, and participate in parliamentary procedures. This is why even conservative congressional Republicans have been comfortable in criticizing the terrorism of the South African government. This is why American blacks recently gave Bishop Desmond Tutu, South Africa's foremost exponent of "cherished . . . Western political values," such a warm welcome.

Thus Mr. Loury should be able to see that the notion that American blacks are somehow increasingly anti-American is as insupportable as the notion that American liberals are anti-American. Just as blacks have allied themselves with the defenders of Western values in South Africa, so too have American liberals allied themselves with the defenders of Western values in countries like Argentina, Guatemala, and the Philippines. In all four countries, governments that enjoyed the support of the Reagan administration have conducted systematic campaigns of political terrorism against those who speak up in favor of basic Western values. Indeed, Mr. Loury would do well to consider that in all four countries attacks on democratic communities were justified by the spurious allegation that they were "profoundly anti-Western."

JEFFERSON MORLEY
The New Republic
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As an admirer of Glenn C. Loury, I read his article with interest. Unfortunately, I don't think he has looked closely enough at the decade prior to the Andrew Young affair and the affirmative-action debate, and he has, as a result, underestimated the widespread anti-Semitic sentiment among blacks that predated these developments.

As he notes, tensions existed because of neighborhood relationships between Jewish storekeeper and black customer, Jewish landlord and black tenant. However, what must also be recognized is that in the late 60's and early 70's, during the period of burgeoning black identity, a whole array of black cultural and political leaders abetted the growth of anti-Semitism. Such figures as Imamu Amiri Baraka, Nikki Giovanni, Angela Davis, Eldridge Cleaver, and many others disparaged Jews in varying degrees in their rhetoric and in their art. At a time when black youth in particular were turning impatiently away from the traditional leadership—from Martin Luther King and Roy Wilkins—these militant and often charismatic leaders were powerful models.

I was a teacher in a middle-class black high school in Philadelphia during that period, and it was impossible not to be aware of the increasing and unchecked anti-Semitism. Certainly not all, perhaps not most, popular public figures fostered this tendency, but unquestionably many did.

By 1979, when the Andrew Young incident occurred, a flood of anti-Jewish feeling could erupt with hardly a murmur of dissent from within the black community (Julius Lester was an eloquent exception) because the expression of such attitudes was already commonplace and acceptable.

Similarly, the argument that affirmative action ignited black resentments is misleading, I believe. Not only was anti-Semitism widespread by the time the issue became prominent, but the debate was, in its early stages especially, a rather remote and academic one, not a topic followed closely by the man in the street. Moreover, Jews did not in the end prevent affirmative action from becoming institutionalized; they never were an obtacle to the hiring or promotion of blacks under the preferential system. This is not to say that the disagreements between the two groups over the issue have not exacerbated tensions, but that the controversy has provoked animosity among the minority elite more than among the masses.

The real problem seems to concern one of Mr. Loury's own themes —the need for the reinforcement of values by an honorable and dedicated leadership. Sadly, the same leadership that has shied away from emphatically reaffirming for blacks those values that strengthen family and personal development has also retreated from a clear-cut denunciation of anti-Semitism. As recently as 1985 such national black leaders as Mayor Marion Berry of Washington, Mayor Harold Washington of Chicago, and Mayor Andrew Young of Atlanta refused to issue unequivocal condemnations of Louis Farrakhan.

Let us hope that articulate and thoughtful voices such as Mr. Loury's will provide the sort of leadership that was weakened and obscured during the turbulence of the last fifteen years, and that such voices can become a potent alternative to the lure of the demagogues.

ANDREA N. LEVIN
Newtonville, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his excellent article, "Behind the Black-Jewish Split," Glenn C. Loury emphasizes some root causes of this dismaying trend. He focuses, however, on areas of economic, political, and sociological tensions, stopping short of those spiritual dimensions which often are at the vortex of a community's posture and vision. I would be anxious to know his evaluation of what the current religious leadership in the black community is doing, or is not doing, to heal the rift, to mitigate tensions, to alleviate estrangement from the Jewish community, and, conversely, whether he believes that effective steps are being taken by rabbinic and synagogue bodies to do likewise.

Certainly, the voices of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise are truly missed and desperately needed at a time like this. . . .

But since the Jewish people are also not a monolithic group, I would be interested in how blacks, not all of whom are Christian, perceive other blacks, some of whom are Jews.

[RABBI] IRVING J. BLOCK
The Brotherhood Synagogue
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Glenn C. Loury's article offers valuable insights into the rift between the black and Jewish communities. I agree with Mr. Loury that much of the current antagonism between the leaderships stems from subscribing to conflicting nationalisms. I believe, however, that a more fundamental cause for dis-

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harmony is the hostility of blacks toward whites. . . .

Mr. Loury identifies the civil-rights movement as the source of many of the issues that tend to divide Jews and blacks. The movement, promoting confrontation, unleashed sentiments that had always existed but that had previously been contained; and after the movement reached its apogee in the late 1960's, black racism emerged as a major factor in intergroup relations. Prior to the civil-rights era, blacks and Jews interacted mainly through their political elites. These ties had not been stress-tested. They collapsed under the weight of a mass movement that centered on black consciousness.

In the early stages, this movement was heavily influenced by scholars who sought to promote black self-understanding and self-esteem. A secondary effect of these well-intentioned efforts, however, was to overemphasize the differences between whites (including Jews) and blacks and to place a heavy burden of guilt on the shoulders of whites, a process that Mr. Loury calls ratification of historic claims. These academics made countless contributions to a kind of revisionist scholarship, but in the process unwittingly fashioned excuses for black hostility to whites, fueled a debilitating black reaction, and promoted isolationism. Well-meaning people rationalized black hate as a desirable catharsis attendant on self-renewal. . . .

The rise of the black-consciousness movement reflects the drive of intellectuals to secure ratification of blacks' special claims on America's sense of justice. The popular counterpart of this conscious campaign to revise history, and a deeper-lying factor in the hostility of blacks to whites, is the feeling among many blacks that their unique calling is to be the moral conscience of humanity. This sentiment is mirrored time and again in the presumption of black politicians to speak for the world's poor and disinherited. . . . As a group, however, they have carefully selected their causes, and their collective voice has been noticeably weaker on the efforts of Soviet Jews to emigrate from the USSR or the quest of Ethiopian Jewry to go to Israel. . . .

As long as blacks and whites have been in contact with each other there has been color racism, but black hostility to whites has rarely,

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if ever, been as systematically exploited by blacks as it is today. Apart from the moral problems this practice raises, the perpetuation of black hostility to whites virtually assures that blacks will not be able to go beyond suspicion of Jews or other whites (including Hispanics, toward whom antagonism is increasingly sharp), make common cause with them, or (much less) learn from them. Black racism is a key cause of black isolation in American society.

In view of the gulf that separates the communities today, a general movement toward personal involvements between average Jews and average blacks is unlikely. The rift, which is widening, does, as the black political elite is fond of pointing out, stem in part from racism. Racism, however, exists on both sides of the divide. The black leadership must be urged to acknowledge the existence of black racism, to call it by its name, and do something about it.

RONALD MCEACHIN
Newark, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Glenn C. Loury has provided an interesting and thought-provoking analysis of black-Jewish relations. While I am in agreement with some of his views, I feel Mr. Loury presents a one-sided approach which might lead the readers of COMMENTARY to mistaken conclusions.

Throughout his analysis, Mr. Loury equates "racial quotas" with "affirmative action." It should be clear that the two terms are not synonymous, and the failure to distinguish between them serves to evoke an emotional response against any form of affirmative action. . . .

My major disagreement, however, is with Mr. Loury's characterization of the current emerging political identity among blacks as "profoundly anti-Western." Half of the "black elite" Mr. Loury names are elected officials. The other half have risen to prominence in part because of their association with the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. It is hard to imagine black leaders who are more supportive of Western Judeo-Christian beliefs than those cited by Mr. Loury. Moreover, to assert that black opinion on Israel is shaped by rejection of Western civilization is not only wrong but offensive.

The overriding concerns of most African-Americans are the elimination of racism and the opportunity to enter the political, economic, and social mainstream of American life. This has led blacks to oppose various government policies both here and abroad. These views, however, are not based on a generic anti-Western philosophy, but on opposing specific examples of racism and oppression.

Although I am critical of Mr. Loury's analysis, I share his concern over the strained relations between blacks and Jews. It is essential that both groups develop a clear understanding of the reasons that have led to current conflicts. Moreover, disagreements on particular issues do not necessarily mean opposition to the ideals and aspirations of the other group.

DAVID M. ALLEN
Atlanta, Georgia

GLENN C. LOURY writes:

Into my discussion of divided nationalistic sentiments among black American intellectuals, Jefferson Morley reads his own worst fears. I was pointing to an ambivalence among black intellectuals about American national purpose, which has led some to express publicly the view that Martin Luther King, Jr. was murdered with the assistance of the FBI or CIA, to declare themselves blacks first and only then Americans, to celebrate the rise of OPEC, to place the governments of Syria and Israel on the same moral plane, to see in Communist-led revolutions in the Third World the moral equivalent of the civil-rights movement, to declare a preference for the leadership of Castro over Reagan on the grounds of Castro's allegedly greater compassion for the poor, to depict as a racist act the American intervention which liberated thousands of Grenada blacks from the specter of a Stalinist tyranny, or to answer complaints about Soviet Gulags with this insight: "We have political prisoners in the U.S., too." Mr. Morley, however, sees me slinging the "anti-American" epithet at all blacks. He worries (though with sufficient generosity to allow that it might not be my intention) that this adds credibility to the conservative charge that Left-liberal foreign-policy views are motivated, at base, by a hatred of America.

What Mr. Morley must try to understand is that the political identity of American blacks is something more than a prize to be sought by the Left or Right in their ongoing struggle for predominance. At stake here is the creation and preservation in the United States of a sense of shared purpose which can serve to hold this polyglot society together as a nation. We must not allow our inevitable ideological differences to become coincident with differences of ethnicity. The moral capital and political influence of blacks in our public life are not merely weights to be used to tip the scale for or against Mr. Morley's position on the Nicaraguan *contras*.

One of the problems with which blacks now must deal is that some adherents of a Left-liberal political agenda, itself deeply troubled and largely discredited in the eyes of the American mainstream, find in the black struggle for equality a vehicle through which to keep alive and before the public views which, absent the legitimization conferred by support from the masses of the black poor, would be deservedly consigned to the dustbin of history. Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign provided a classic example of this syndrome. The great majority of poor blacks supported Jackson in the Democratic primaries for the obvious reason that one of their own had mounted a serious campaign for the nation's highest office. But the white, Left-liberal hangers-on to the "rainbow" found in Jackson a mechanism through which to appropriate, for their own ends, the moral and political authority grounded in the impoverished condition of his black supporters.

Sympathy for the Cuban revolution is one of those no-longer-tenable reflexes which could be carried into our public life only on the backs of Jackson's poor black supporters. Thus when Jackson went to Havana before the Democratic convention and declared, in effect, that Che Guevara and Martin Luther King were partners in struggle, cheers rang out throughout the American Left. The fact that the struggle King led in this country was one which to this day remains out of reach for blacks in Cuba—the Cuba which Che Guevara helped to build—matters little to the Left. Yet I insist that this fact is of significance to a great many blacks.

The legacy of Martin Luther King belongs to all Americans; it is not the private preserve of Jesse Jackson and his leftist supporters. Nor was the black vote in the Democratic primaries a referendum on Jackson's foreign-policy views. I

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show no disrespect to the masses of blacks in arguing that their loyalty to a favorite son should be distinguished from an endorsement of those views.

All of this ought not to be so mysterious to Mr. Morley, since he would no doubt be among the first to insist that President Reagan's landslide obliteration of Mondale-Ferraro did not constitute a blanket endorsement by the American people of Reagan's attitude toward (say) the Guatemalan military. Neither can the large black crowds and suddenly silent black mayors who appear wherever Louis Farrakhan speaks be taken as a popular black endorsement of his virulent anti-Semitism.

Is my position, in speaking out about such matters, really "unenviable"? Mr. Morley, I am sure, knows the difference between a democrat and a demagogue. He would do well to remember that it is a difference worth noting even when the demagogue agrees with you.

My thanks to Andrea N. Levin for her admiration. I am aware of the history of black anti-Semitism to which she refers, though I chose not to dwell on it. Yet the theme of my essay—that black-Jewish tensions are based upon deep and intractable differences in the public visions of the two groups' intellectual and political elites—is entirely consistent with her view. I also agree that there has been less overt opposition to expressions of anti-Semitism among blacks than one would like to see. At times, as during the height of the 1984 presidential-primary campaign, it has seemed positively disloyal to the race to lament publicly such anti-Semitic sentiments.

Along with Rabbi Block, I too miss the moral leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., and not only in the matter of black-Jewish relations. I am familiar with only a small portion of the activities of black and Jewish clergy aimed at healing the rift between the two groups, and so am in no position to characterize the adequacy of these efforts. But my essay was intended to alert people of good will, like Rabbi Block, to the fact that such spiritually motivated efforts at reconciliation as he seems to favor must reckon with profound differences in world views. While I do not consider his proposed efforts futile, I have little hope that they alone can negate the consequences of those conflicting public visions.

James Baldwin anticipated Ronald McEachin's argument when he said (in 1967), "Negroes are anti-Semitic because they're anti-white." Much of what I wrote in my article about the sources of conflict between blacks and Jews applies to conflict between blacks and whites generally. However, I take issue with Mr. McEachin in that I see black racism as more nearly effect than it is cause of black isolation in American society. Surely, despite the recent decades of civil-rights progress, our shared memory of lynchings, degradation, and exclusion has not dimmed to the point where we no longer recognize the extent to which black racism is a reaction to the profoundly debilitating experience of white racism. This does not excuse the behavior, but may help to explain it and

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should, I think, condition our responses to it.

In saying this I do not join with those many blacks and whites who are rather tolerant of racial hatred when it is found among those who have suffered from it. The fact of victimization does not indemnify the victim against the possibility of committing moral wrong. One might even regard as a kind of racism the apparent unwillingness of guilt-ridden whites to hold blacks to the same standard of civility in racial matters as would be demanded of others.

I accept David M. Allen's distinction between affirmative action and quotas. Not all of what goes on under the former heading constitutes an example of the latter. But much of it does, and it makes no sense to deny this. A set-aside program for municipal purchasing which mandates that 15 percent of public expenditures be placed with minority businesses is a racial quota. The decision by a public employer, faced with the need to make reductions without upsetting the racial balance, to lay off whites with ten years' seniority while retaining blacks with two years on the job is equally harmful and offensive to those who have been unfairly treated. As I tried to suggest in my article, however, the problem with affirmative action (or quotas, or numerical guidelines, or goals and timetables) is much deeper than these semantic distinctions.

Finally, I did not label black American politicians as anti-American; to do so would be not only offensive, but stupid. I only meant, as I have already explained at length in my response to Jefferson Morley, that there is an ambivalence among black intellectuals about their relationship to the American political system which derives from their history and conditions the views they express on America's role in the world.

N.Y. vs. D.C.

To the Editor of Commentary:

As a former midtown Manhattanite (one of the "real" New Yorkers), I found Tod Lindberg's "New York Down, Washington Up" [January] a refreshing answer to all those people who look at me as if I'm crazy when they learn that I left "the city" without regret and indeed even with a certain pleasure.

Like Mr. Lindberg, I found New York's negative attributes outweighing the vestiges of its intellectual, cultural, and physical greatness. Like Mr. Lindberg, I moved to a rising-star city, one which is in "a position to join battle with New York" on fresh ground. The city, however, is not Washington but Boston; and a counter-myth to New York is alive and kicking here. Boston has an old-world charm that offers a cornucopia of attractions—a thriving intellectual environment; world-renowned artistic resources; physically attractive, well-maintained, and affordable surroundings; and a local economy that offers a first-class range of skilled jobs free of Wall Street's cutthroat atmosphere.

My wife and I, both in our mid-twenties, are part of "the youngish 'creative' talent that has moved away" from New York, but our universe of options was greater than Mr. Lindberg indicated in his tale of two cities. I suspect there are still other alternatives for mobile young Americans.

Christopher Laszlo
Boston, Massachusetts

To the Editor of Commentary:

Tod Lindberg ignores New York's major claim to leadership: the sheer quantity of people involved in the arts, the media, and other intellectual businesses. The reason Chicago and other cities can never be New York is that they do not have enough of an educated population to produce nearly the quantity of intellectual output that New York does.

The problem with Washington is that probably only ten or twenty thousand people are involved in the power scene, either as players or as paid observers. Because so few are involved, the city will be unable in the foreseeable future to support a great opera company, symphony orchestra, numerous theaters, or even many publications.

New York's housing problem is not a weakness but a strength. It reflects the fact that even more New-York-*Times* types are flowing into the city and into the outer boroughs and New Jersey, thereby giving us an even more massive lead over the other, thinly populated cities of this country.

Robert W. Wilson
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Tod Lindberg's article was fascinating to read. As a transplanted New Yorker, I was really brought back to my old stamping ground. But his views on the rise of Washington are all wet. Imagine, a so-called city without any real skyscrapers, and with all those funny-looking white buildings.

As Mr. Lindberg himself suggests, the decline of New York City as an amenable place to live is due in large part to rent-control legislation. I have a proposition for him; it's a bias of most economists called *ceteris paribus*, other things being equal. Imagine that *both* Washington and New York City had rent controls. . . . Is there then any doubt that the former would again revert to the mediocrity it so richly deserves? Alternatively, imagine a New York City not anchored in the mire by rent controls. Under such an unlikely circumstance, there is no question that the Big Apple would once again take its rightful place as the preeminent city of the entire globe.

Walter Block
The Fraser Institute
Vancouver, British Columbia

To the Editor of Commentary:

The idea! The very idea that a former New Yorker should turn tail and espouse D.C.! Washington is a nice city, beautifully laid out, and it has the government, but New York is New York. . . . This poor woman left New York for financial reasons, too. But I also left my heart. . . .

Jean Cranstoun
Albany, Kentucky

Tod Lindberg writes:

What Christopher Laszlo has put a finger on is real, but different from what he thinks it is. He is writing about yuppification, a genuine national phenomenon. The young are making their presence known in urban areas all over, including certainly Boston, but also including, for example, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, and even Baltimore, Maryland. The chief characteristic of this influx, however, is uniformity from locale to locale. There is no need to rehearse its components at great length, since they have been well documented: think of pesto, Mrs. Field's cookies, Krups coffee makers, and exposed brick. The point is that though New York and Washington have these in abundance, they have something more as well.

Does Boston? There was the Tea

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Party and Paul Revere, of course. Now, it seems to me, there is mainly Cambridge, scene of Harvard and MIT, which in 1981 considered a ballot proposition to declare itself a nuclear-free zone—one if by land, two if by sea, three if by submarine-launched cruise missile. An interesting effort to mix old and new, but, unfortunately, the proposition failed.

Robert W. Wilson mistakes quantity for quality and significance. On the publications front, it is fascinating that the most successful recent magazine venture out of New York is the two-year-old monthly, *Manhattan, inc.* It offers profiles of New York businessmen, inside-story articles about corporations and firms and other tales of the very rich. It is a magazine the subject and presumptive audience of which are precisely the prosperous bankers, lawyers, and executives whose city I said New York is fast becoming. *Manhattan, inc.* is entertaining. But as it is in fact a challenger to *New York* magazine's long-standing dominance in the city, I am afraid of it. *New York*—which has, to be sure, published occasional articles on the subjects *Manhattan, inc.* takes up to the exclusion of all others—has also ably reflected the city's broader appeal. If I am right, and *Manhattan, inc.*'s star continues to rise at *New York*'s expense, I daresay it will be because there is less and less of that broader appeal.

Ceteris paribus, Walter Block may be right. *Ceteris non paribus*, I am right. *Cetera non paria sunt.*

Finally, I agree with Jean Cranstoun: New York is New York. Alas.

Butler at Columbia

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his article, "Dinner with Butler and Eisenhower" [January], Edward Le Comte raises the question of Nicholas Murray Butler's attitude toward Jews but offers no answer other than a repetition of Diana Trilling's account of the circumstances surrounding her husband's appointment to Columbia's English department.

I have recently spoken about this matter with long-time Columbia faculty members I.I. Rabi, Salo Baron, and James Gutmann as well as Albert Marrin, a Butler biographer, and Mrs. Trilling, who, incidentally, erred when she stated that her husband was the first Jew appointed to Columbia's English department. Joel Spingarn, a literary critic later instrumental in founding the NAACP, was appointed to Columbia's faculty in 1899 at the age of twenty-two.

Mr. Le Comte's assertion that Butler's anti-Semitism "if it existed, would not be easily detected," is correct, but not, as he suggests, "because Butler was so far from coarse." The distaste for Jews prevalent in the circles in which Butler moved was discernible, genteel as it might be. It was after all the era when Morris Raphael Cohen could be turned down for a Yale appointment because "he didn't know how to wear a dinner jacket." (Indeed, one of Butler's two wives is said to have nurtured a more overt anti-Semitism.) It was Butler's lordly aloofness from both students and faculty that made it impossible then, and difficult even now, to ascertain his views vis-à-vis Jewish students and faculty. Rabi, a Nobel laureate whose career "just rocketed" once he stepped on Columbia's academic ladder, and who subsequently single-handedly created at Columbia one of the greatest physics departments in the world, not only never had dinner with Butler, he never spoke with the man. . . .

In making academic decisions where Jews and Jewish issues were involved, Butler was subject to the pressures of his Middle East faculty and of the Union Theological Seminary, with which Columbia has ties. Though there is much to learn about how Butler handled such matters during the four-decades-plus of his presidency (1901-45), he appears, even in his eighties, to have been, as Felix Adler quipped, "in control of his faculties." Certainly, he managed some scholarly coups in Jewish studies that would have been impossible at other universities.

In 1944 Butler obtained Adolph S. Oko's great Spinoza collection for Columbia after it had been refused by Princeton "on the grounds that it would bring in Jewish students and scholars." He also actively pursued Emma Lazarus's correspondence. . . .

But the foremost of Butler's Jewish academic "credits" must be considered the establishment of a chair of Jewish studies in 1929, the first of its kind in an American university. Created by the bequest of Nathan J. Miller, the chair's title and departmental "location" were hot potatoes tossed among Columbia's linguistics, theology, and history departments, until Butler named it "Jewish history, literature, and institutions" and placed it firmly in the history department. His appointee, the thirty-four-year-old Salo Baron, had insisted, "I am a historian."

Butler appears to have had an interest in the early history of Jews in New York, and made inquiries on the subject to Dr. Louis Finkelstein of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Perhaps this interest stemmed from the fact that Gershom Mendes Seixas, the first cantor born and bred in America, was an incorporator and early trustee of Columbia University; perhaps it was because Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo, with whom Butler had a warm friendship, came from a Sephardi family that had settled in New York before the American Revolution. . . .

Butler's major contribution to Jewish life on campus may have been his refusal in 1907 to permit a Protestant dedication of the newly built St. Paul's chapel because that would have prevented Jewish and Catholic students from holding exercises in it. When a churchman remonstrated with Butler, he is said to have silenced him with the declaration, "I am Pope on Morningside Heights." Butler is also credited with adding Catholic and Jewish religious counselors to the college's staff, . . . though he appears to have had little or no concern with the everyday variety of anti-Semitism faced by Jewish students and faculty.

On friendly terms with fellow academician and eminent economist Edwin R.A. Seligmann, five years his senior and a member of the Columbia faculty since 1885, Butler maintained amicable social relations as well with the Lewisohns, Klingensteins, Buttenwiesers, and Schiffs, who made large contributions to the university. . . . Yet the building Adolph Lewisohn contributed to Columbia in 1904 was called "Mines" before it took his name, and the building Jacob H. Schiff contributed was never named for him. And along with ordinary Jewish students, the scions of the elite experienced slights and insults, and were blackballed by Gentile fraternities. (The first Jewish fraternity in the country was established at Columbia in 1898.)

Pontifical, aloof, cautious . . . Butler, although one of the 119 signatories along with Presidents Woodrow Wilson, William How-

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ard Taft, and Theodore Roosevelt of the January 1921 "Christian Protest" against anti-Semitism, was essentially silent on Zionism and the Holocaust, the great Jewish issues of his era. In reply to requests in the 30's and 40's from Jewish leaders, including Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, his informal adviser on Jewish affairs, for statements, Butler often asserted that his status as trustee of the Carnegie Endowment prohibited him from taking public stands. . . .

Intolerance on the grandest scale is what triggered Butler's interest in Jews. "Undemocratic behavior" tripped his pen. His statements ostensibly addressed to Jewish organizations on the subject of persecution were in reality supplications and admonitions to persecutors to behave better toward everyone.

Asked in 1924, the year Ku Klux Klan membership exceeded four million, for a Jewish New Year's message on the subject of Christians and Jews, Butler sent the Pittsburgh *Jewish Chronicle* a statement in which he called the Klan "as un-American as hereditary monarchy," and described its members as "enemies of America, not its defenders."

In 1939, when refugees were streaming from Europe, he told the American Jewish Congress that he was opposed to "the worldwide persecutions of races and minorities which are now going on. This manifestation," he added, "not only of narrowness of view, but of cruelty which almost approaches barbarism, is one of the marvels of our supposedly modern time. Unless we can bring men to look upon their fellows as human beings like themselves regardless of racial origin, economic status, or religion, we shall not be getting on with the building of a truly democratic society." . . .

Was Butler anti-Semitic? Possibly. But he was also sufficiently committed to creating a great university to override his anti-Semitism. Or sufficiently shrewd to hide it. Or sufficiently principled to rise above it. It is tempting to believe that the Pope of Morningside Heights might have tried in his ponderous way to be worthy of his own ideals.

ESTELLE GILSON

Bronx, New York

EDWARD LE COMTE writes:

Estelle Gilson and I are hardly in disagreement. She cannot decide that Nicholas Murray Butler was anti-Semitic and neither can I. My article is the springboard for her independent (and useful) excursus.

Let me note, however, that my article was more than just "a repetition of Diana Trilling's account" (which, however, is major evidence). I went analytically through Butler's *Across the Busy Years*, told relevant anecdotes about appointments, and presented a view of Butler's personality. I too consulted my old friend James Gutmann, who, not being well, wrote back briefly and too late.

The second sentence of Miss Gilson's third paragraph does nothing to deny what the first sentence has me saying. "Far from coarse" and "genteel": are not these synonymous?

As for Morris Raphael Cohen, I show in my article that one does not need to be Jewish in order not to "know how to wear a dinner jacket."

Totalitarianism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Walter Laqueur's article on totalitarianism ["Is There Now, or Has There Ever Been, Such a Thing as Totalitarianism?," October 1985] is notable for its exacting scholarship and thorough command of the subject, and yet it strangely elides the critical question raised in its very first paragraph: . . . why should the United States react differently to totalitarian as opposed to authoritarian countries? Approached from that vantage point, the problem of classifying nations is transported from pure theory to the more fruitful plane of experience and action.

In the history of the world since World War II, which is the experience with which we must deal, the answer is perfectly clear—both to Jeane J. Kirkpatrick and I daresay to the mass of the American public. There are two distinguishing characteristics other than those mentioned by Mr. Laqueur that combine to provide an unequivocal answer. First, Soviet-style Communism is doctrinally committed to revolutionizing the world for the purpose of recreating it in its own image. However binding that commitment may be judged, and opinions clearly differ, the indisputable fact is that the Soviet Union has acted upon it as faithfully as circumstances seemed to permit. Since engulfing nearly all of Eastern Europe early on, it has added to its empire in just the last decade Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, and South Yemen, with Afghanistan and Nicaragua still hanging in the balance. In these accomplishments it has been abetted by its more obedient puppets like Cuba and East Germany. Hence one reason we must treat the Communist bloc differently is sheer self-defense.

A second relevant difference between totalitarians and authoritarians, unmentioned by Mr. Laqueur, is that the first group is obviously Communist while the second is capitalist. Just because they are capitalist, authoritarian countries harbor islands of individual freedom that have an ever-present potential, however suppressed, to intensify and expand. Generally, people can buy what they want, live where they want, work and invest where they want, and bargain directly or indirectly for wages. One highly important implication is that there is *hope*—the *possibility* that an authoritarian country can grow into democracy as in Spain, Portugal, and maybe now in Argentina and El Salvador. It is a hope that can be heightened, and in some instances has been, by the direct foreign investment and subsequent business operations of American multinational companies. There is clearly no such avenue open in a nation once in the clasp of the Russian bear.

I would imagine that Mr. Laqueur was inhibited from according definitional acknowledgment to this *economic* distinction by the haunting specter of Nazi Germany. Some contend that National Socialism was "capitalist," even though the use of private resources remained subject to the supreme will of Hitler. In that case, admitting the economic criterion might invite the classification of Nazi Germany as authoritarian instead of totalitarian, as the Soviet Union patently is.

I would submit that this concern is pointless. In the first place, I know of no law in history or science that says that these two political and moral abominations must be placed in precisely the same category, whatever we may call it, especially given their utterly disparate historical antecedents. Secondly, Nazi Germany has passed from this world, leaving its own unique blot on the annals of mankind. Whatever classification we may assign to it in retrospect has

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even less relevance for America's current international problems than the particular additional categories we may now invent or revive to embrace Iran, Deng's evolving China, or the remaining non-Communist countries of black Africa.

MELVILLE J. ULMER
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

WALTER LAQUEUR writes:

Melville J. Ulmer correctly noted (as did some others) that my article dealt with a "theoretical" issue, and that I did not address myself to the question of what follows from this for U.S. foreign policy. I did so deliberately; the realities of world politics are complex, and to deal with them in a satisfactory manner would involve writing another long article—possibly a book—dealing with concrete cases. I may or may not write this one day, but it seemed pointless to deliver a few obiter dicta and leave it at that. I agree with Mr. Ulmer when he argues that authoritarian regimes (in contrast to totalitarian ones), however abhorrent, are usually not expansionist and do not directly threaten the rest of the world.

As for his "second relevant difference," I cannot follow him. Mr. Ulmer is an economist, and he clearly believes in the importance of his subject and has strong views about it. He evidently does not like the fact that totalitarianism is the classical case of the primacy of politics over economics, and he would like to reintroduce economics through the back door. The Marxists have been equally unhappy and tried to do the same for decades; I fear he will not be any more successful than they have been. In Nazi Germany, at least up until the outbreak of the war, people could buy what they wanted, live where they wanted, work and invest where they wanted, and yet it was not a free society.

German Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Although it may be an exercise in futility, I would like to call attention to some of the doubtful assumptions in Richard S. Levy's review of *The German Jews* by H. I. Bach [Books in Review, January]. Mr. Levy writes with a kind of retrospective arrogance that is the bane of sound historiography. He accuses pre-Hitlerian German Jews of "self-delusion" for refusing to recognize that most German Christians considered them "alien." Mr. Levy ends his scolding by leaving American Jews to wonder if they themselves are not "living a lie." As Franz Oppenheimer recently suggested in the *American Spectator*, Teutonophobia has a way of connecting with anti-Americanism, even when it appears as a defense of Jewish interests.

How does Mr. Levy know that "most Germans" regarded Jews as "aliens"? I presume that he is not simply inferring this from a Holocaust perspective. According to scholars Peter Merkl and Sarah Gordon, it is hard to demonstrate the presence of anti-Semitic attitudes even in most rank-and-file Nazis, who joined the party to get ahead rather than to express dislike for Jews. Hitler's Nuremberg laws in 1934 did not enjoy widespread support and were violated by Germans, who continued to associate with Jews, even in the face of government threats. In the late 19th century, the middle-class German political parties of the Center and Center Left condemned anti-Semitism emphatically and repeatedly. Although those who made such condemnations may not always have been sincere (how does one judge these matters?), there were far more Germans who publicly opposed than defended anti-Semitism.

Curiously, German Jews as a group did not stick to the political and social coalition that defended their honor and economic interests. Like American Jews of a later generation, German Jews of the 1890's supported in growing numbers the anti-capitalist Left, which was often anti-Semitic. Indeed, German Jews were on the whole less supportive of German society than Messrs. Levy and Bach suggest. Some of the figures whom both use to illustrate the attempted German-Jewish synthesis were ardent Zionists and/or political radicals: e.g., Martin Buber and Hermann Cohen.

As for the relevance of the German catastrophe for American Jews, I remain puzzled by Mr. Levy's reasoning. If Germans are as uniquely loathsome as he im-

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plies in his review, why should we believe that Americans might try to imitate their worst behavior? Or are there undiscussed reasons for which one is supposed to entertain suspicions about the decency of Americans—e.g., Ronald Reagan and the Moral Majority? . . .

PAUL GOTTFRIED
Rockford, Illinois

RICHARD S. LEVY writes:

Before the achievement of equality in 1869, Jews were subject to several kinds of legal discrimination almost everywhere in Germany. For whatever reason, they were not thought to be like other Germans. In 1893, 342,425 Germans, peasants and petite bourgeoisie for the most part, gave their votes to overtly anti-Semitic parties calling for the abolition of Jewish equality and stressing Jewish alienness. Their social superiors in the prestigious Conservative party included the following in the party platform of 1892: "We combat the manifold upsurging and decomposing Jewish influence in our national life." The traditional defenders of German Jewry, the liberal and Left-liberal parties, ceased putting up unbaptized Jewish candidates between 1898 and 1912, bowing to the anti-Jewish sentiments of their constituents.

Political anti-Semitism rose and fell with the economic health of Germany. But the social rejection of Jews as other than German, even when it did not issue in overt anti-Semitic acts, continued and, some have argued, intensified over time. German university fraternities decreed that Jews were dishonorable and incapable of giving satisfaction through the duel. The doyen of German historians, Heinrich von Treitschke, declared anti-Semitism a "natural reaction of Germanic national feeling against an alien element. . . ." Practicing Jews were unacceptable as reserve officers in the Prussian army. The unconstitutional exclusion of Jews from various branches of the civil service was often justified by government officials who said they feared "irritating a considerable segment of the Christian population." This sort of evidence—and there is a great deal more of it—forms the basis for my contention that Jews were regarded as aliens by most Germans.

Clearly, these broadly representative instances do not account for all Germans or even the majority. But just as clearly there is no evidence that the individuals and groups who espoused these views or took these actions were going against the grain of German opinion, or that they were saying things about Jews that deeply offended most Germans. It was the defenders of the Jews who were the nonconformists. Many of these felt they had to make the case that Jews were Germans, simply Germans of a different faith, but most did not even try, settling for the idea that Jews might become Germans if treated honorably.

The argument that anti-Semitism was not the main reason to join or vote for the Nazi party is well-founded. However, Paul Gottfried seriously misstates the findings of Merkl and Gordon; the sampling of Nazi party members whose biographies they used showed only 33.3 percent who gave no evidence of anti-Semitic attitudes; the remaining two-thirds of the sample ranged between "mild" and "paranoid" in their anti-Semitism. But more to the point is that the Nazis' propaganda degrading Jews, their advocacy and practice of violence toward Jews, did not inhibit the 13,745,800 Germans from all walks of life who gave their votes to Hitler in 1932. The Nuremberg laws of 1935 (not 1934) outlawed sexual relations between Germans and Jews; the continuation of casual economic or social contact after the laws went into effect in fact proves little about how Germans regarded Jews. The active hatred of Jews by the Nazis and their predecessors battened on the passive toleration of anti-Semitism on the part of the Germans, the noble exceptions notwithstanding.

I cannot satisfactorily explain why Bach rationalized this evidence out of existence. Mr. Gottfried's rationalization is easier to understand but more difficult to forgive. If I read him correctly, he argues that even if Jews were rejected by Germans (which, of course, he does not admit), it was their own fault for not sufficiently supporting mainstream German society. The evidence he adduces is the "growing numbers" of Jews who supported the anti-capitalist Left. Jacob Toury, the authority on the question of Jewish political affiliation, estimates that 87 percent of Jewish voters supported one of the liberal (very capitalist) parties in 1892; in 1912, 73 percent still did so (*Die politischen Orientierungen der Juden in Deutschland*, pp. 192, 275). Until 1930 Jews overwhelmingly supported liberal parties; after 1930 they divided their vote between the Catholic Center and the Social Democrats, by this time the sole champion of Weimar democracy.

Not only is Mr. Gottfried's assertion without foundation, it suggests that people should expect to be excluded from the nation if they hold "indecent" political beliefs, oppose government policies, or depart from prevailing values. Groundless and unsavory, this assertion is also beside the point of my review or of Bach's thesis. Bach chose Buber, Cohen, and other figures to illustrate the idea of a German-Jewish synthesis because of their wholehearted cultural identity with things German and European, not because of their political docility.

Finally, a few personal matters. I do not find Germans uniquely loathsome, nor am I an anti-American. It is because I see parallels in the situation of German and American Jews, despite the numerous differences, that I raised the question of self-delusion at the end of my review. Only in America have Jews committed themselves as fully to the life of the nation as they did in Germany. I thought it fair to ask if fears of a potentially similar outcome lay at the bottom of our enduring and passionate interest in the fate of German Jewry.

Violent Death

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In her review of *The Victim's Song* by Alice R. Kaminsky [Books in Review, January], Rachel Abrams makes us feel what Mrs. Kaminsky feels. Those of us who have dealt professionally with violent death have found it quite uncharming. I remember the wife of Milton Helpern, who was New York City's chief medical examiner for many years, telling us how impatient she had been to go out on a case with her husband. When she did go—to a sordid killing in the lower stratum of society—she became sick, or almost. She never went again. Were I the Mikado, my object all sublime would be to sentence Norman Mailer and his ilk to a stretch in the city morgue.

ROBERT CARLEN, M.D.
Sayville, New York

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How Not to Occupy the West Bank

Menahem Milson

SINCE the Six-Day War of 1967, when Israel conquered the West Bank from Jordan (which had annexed it in 1948) and the Gaza Strip from Egypt (which had been holding it under military government), these areas have been under an Israeli military government. The various plans and ideas concerning their future and the sharp controversy in Israel about this matter have been extensively discussed. The question of Jewish settlement in these areas has also been heatedly debated, as have the measures taken by the Israeli authorities to deal with "security events"—terrorist actions or outbursts of violent disorder. Remarkably, however, the principles which have guided the Israeli Military Government (IMG) in administering the day-to-day life of the Arab population of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, a population currently estimated at 1.3 million, have been very little discussed or studied.

Yet many observers of different backgrounds and sympathies seem to agree today that Israeli control over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is most likely to continue for the foreseeable future. At the same time there is grave concern among Israelis about the growing tension and the recurrent outbursts of violence between Jews and Arabs. It therefore seems that an examination of the principles underlying IMG policy is not only long overdue but highly relevant. For this policy, while not the only factor shaping the situation in the territories, remains crucial to the state of Arab-Jewish relations.

ISRAEL'S borders, which had been established through the War of Independence and the 1949 armistice agreements, left important parts of *Eretz Yisrael* (the historical "Land of Israel") outside Israel's control and were strategically problematic, but they were accepted by the Israelis as a fact of life which could not be changed and most certainly should not be changed by an Israeli military initiative. Surprising though it may be, even the nationalist Herut party, led by Menachem Begin, did not in the pre-1967 period make this issue a part of its political agenda. There was no irredentism in Israeli politics until the conclusion of the Six-Day War.

Of the territories conquered by Israel in that war, only the Arab part of Jerusalem was annexed right away. This act, known as the Unification of Jerusalem, reflected a national consensus. As for the rest of the territories, the government and the Israeli public as a whole were sharply divided.

Mapai, the leading party in the government, held that most of the territories should be traded for peace. Mapai's left-wing partner, Mapam, took the same position, only more emphatically; it stressed that annexation of the territories would be deleterious to Israel, but it did support the unification of Jerusalem and also a change in the borders that would leave Israel less vulnerable than it had been before the Six-Day War.

Begin's Herut party (which had joined the then national-unity government a few days before the war) absolutely rejected any idea of giving up any part of *Eretz Yisrael*, and the National Religious party (NRP) on the whole tended in the same direction. Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres (of the Rafi party, which had also joined the government before the war) were somewhat vague about the future disposition of the West Bank but clearly shunned any talk about "territorial compromise." They were thus closer to the position of Begin and the NRP than to the official line of Mapai.

Ahdut Ha-Avoda, another left-wing ally of Mapai, was also less favorably disposed to territorial concessions than Mapai. In January 1968, Rafi and Ahdut Ha-Avoda merged with Mapai to form the Labor party, and thus the inter-party differences on this issue became intra-party disagreements.

These differences of opinion on the future of the West Bank between Dayan and Peres on the one hand and the veteran Mapai leaders (Levi Eshkol, Pinhas Sapir, and Abba Eban) on the other had an immediate political consequence—namely, an alliance between the former and the NRP and Begin. It was an unofficial and unde-

MENAHEM MILSON is professor of Arabic literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He served as Head of the Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria from November 1981 to September 1982. Mr. Milson's article, "How to Make Peace With the Palestinians," appeared in our May 1981 issue. A different version of the present article was delivered as a paper at the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. last January.

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clared alliance, to be sure, but it was nonetheless well-recognized by all parties concerned. It signaled a clear threat to Labor: should Dayan choose to split Labor, he could form a coalition with Begin and the NRP, thereby breaking the traditional coalition of Mapai and the NRP.

Yet another position within Labor, which can be best described as intermediate, was held by Yigal Allon (of the Ahdut Ha-Avoda faction). Allon rejected the idea of annexing the West Bank but demanded changes in Israel's borders far more substantial than those envisaged by Mapam. Most significantly, he demanded that the Jordan River be recognized as Israel's security border in the east and that a strip of approximately 10 to 15 kilometers along the west bank of the river remain under Israeli contol. The other crucial feature of what came to be known as the Allon Plan was that the rest of the West Bank should be returned to Jordan in exchange for peace.

Allon's intermediate position typically angered both the Left and the Right. Begin and the NRP were incensed by Allon's readiness to trade parts of the Land of Israel in return for peace, while the more dovish Left criticized him for demanding too much territory.

The controversy in Israel over the future of the territories was reflected even in the terminology used to describe them. The most common usage at first was "occupied territories," which seemed the most suitable term for territories conquered in war. But this term raised a question: could one refer to a part of one's own homeland as "occupied"? After all, Hebron, Bethlehem, and Nablus were at the very heart of *Eretz Yisrael* and at the very heart of Jewish attachment to the Land of Israel. Many Israelis on the Right of the political spectrum, mostly the supporters of Herut and the National Religious party, thus preferred the term "liberated territories." Others, in an attempt to avoid ideological debate, called them "new territories," but this term did not gain currency; it was somewhat awkward to refer to the ancient cities of Hebron, Nablus, and Bethlehem as "new," and besides, for how long could the adjective remain apt?

Eventually, in September 1967, the official designation became "kept territories" or "held territories" (*ha-shtahim ha-muhzakim*), that is, territories to be kept or held until their status could be determined in a political settlement. The English term which was adopted, "the administered territories," was not an exact equivalent of the Hebrew, but it at least pointed to the fact that these areas, whether "liberated" or "occupied," did have to be administered.

This schematic list of different ideas concerning the future of the West Bank does not exhaust the variety of Israeli opinions on the matter, but it is enough to explain the reluctance of the Labor prime ministers from 1967 to 1977 to make an unambiguous decision on the future of the West Bank. For any such decision was liable not only to break the coalition government they led but also to split their own party.

It is true that this reluctance to decide, or the "decision not to decide," as government spokesmen described it, was under constant criticism from within the Labor alignment itself and from Israeli intellectuals associated with it. Indeed, it probably would not have persisted if not for the Arab refusal to negotiate peace with Israel. This refusal, canonized in the Arab summit of Khartoum in August 1967 ("the three noes of Khartoum"—no peace, no recognition, and no negotiations), sustained the "decision not to decide" and gave it a rationale even among many Israeli politicians (such as Eban and Sapir) who were in favor of territorial compromise.

Equally true is that the question of the Arab attitude toward Israel, and of whether there could ever be a political solution to the conflict, did not begin with the Six-Day War. It had been an open question ever since the beginning of the Zionist endeavor in Palestine. However, debate over the question was not very lively, precisely because negotiations with the Arabs seemed so unlikely. It was only after June 1967 that it became a heated issue, because at that point many Israelis began hoping that in return for territories they could get peace with the Arabs. The "three noes of Khartoum" dealt a heavy blow to this hope, and the number of Israelis who came to believe that the conflict was insoluble grew in response to hostile Arab actions and pronouncements.

The common notion that Arab hostility to Israel was fundamental, even "natural," elicited different moral judgments from Israelis. Some saw it as a symptom of the aggressive and intolerant nature of Arab (or Muslim) society. Others regarded it as an understandable and even justifiable response to Zionism. In either case, it was considered something which neither Israelis nor Arabs could change; both sides were locked into positions determined by history and culture.

In Moshe Dayan, the man who would become the chief Israeli policy-maker on the West Bank, this bleak deterministic view took root long before the Six-Day War. On May 1, 1956, when he was Chief of Staff, Dayan delivered a speech at the funeral of a young Israeli farmer who had been killed by Arabs while guarding the fields of his kibbutz near the border of the Gaza strip:

> Yesterday morning Ro'i was murdered. The quiet of the spring morning blinded him and he did not see those who were lying in ambush to kill him near the furrow. Let us today not hurl accusations against murderers. What justification do we have to complain about their bitter enmity to us? For eight years they have been sitting in the refugee camps in Gaza, while before their eyes we were turning the land and villages which they and their ancestors had inhabited into our land. It is not from the Arabs in Gaza but from ourselves that we should

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claim the blood of Ro'i. How could we have blinded our eyes from looking at our predicament and from seeing the destiny of our generation in all its cruelty?

Here we also discern Dayan's well-known sympathy for the Palestinian Arabs. He often said that Israelis should not expect the Arabs to love them, but one may well wonder whether this repeated assertion did not in fact reveal a frustrated hidden hope. The ambivalence which many Israelis felt and feel toward the Palestinian Arabs was very intense in Dayan, who was both fascinated by and even fond of them. In conversation he once remarked: "The difference between me and Golda [Meir] is that she loves *Am Yisrael* [the Jewish people] and I love *Eretz Yisrael* [the land of Israel], and therefore I feel closer to a Palestinian *fellah* than to a Jewish tailor from Brooklyn."

In short, underlying the formation of Israel's policy (that is, Dayan's policy) in the territories we find a maze of conflicting perceptions, attitudes, and hopes: attachment to the historic Land of Israel, strategic considerations, sympathy for the Palestinians, and a bleak view of Arab intentions. And there was also another element in this mix, a hope for peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Jews. Although Dayan was always very vague about what specific political solution he had in mind, he repeatedly spoke about "developing patterns of living together with the Arabs." To this end, the policy of the IMG reflected a wish to control without having to feel like an occupier, and without making the people in the territories feel like an occupied populace.

ALTHOUGH the Israeli government never agreed to define its legal status in the occupied territories as that of a "belligerent occupant" (for to do so would suggest recognition of Jordan's sovereignty on the West Bank and would restrict Israel's own claims concerning both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip), it nonetheless decided that the territories should be administered in accordance with international conventions. This meant establishing a military government, which in turn meant that the man in charge would be the Minister of Defense, Moshe Dayan.

At the same time, it was also decided that the various other ministries of the Israeli government would be involved in the administration, each in its special professional area—health, education, labor, welfare, interior, police, etc. The causes of that decision were complex. For one thing, the idea of setting up a special apparatus to deal with such civilian matters as education, health, labor, etc. was alien to the Israeli army. There was, however, another important reason: the members of the cabinet did not wish to leave these new territories exclusively to the Minister of Defense; each and every one of them wanted to have a foothold in the territories and a say about how they were to be administered. Thirdly, according to Dayan's long-time aide, Shlomo Gazit, "Dayan wanted to have maximum control over what was actually done, but did not want to assume formal ministerial responsibility as the minister in charge of the territories. . . ."

Thus the professional staff officers in the headquarters of the military government were civilians appointed by and responsible to their superiors in their respective ministries. At the same time, they were ultimately subordinate to an official appointed by and responsible to the Minister of Defense, whose dominance in the affairs of the territories went practically unchallenged by other members of the cabinet or even by the Prime Minister.

WHAT was the Israeli Military Government expected to do? There was no official Israeli document like the *U.S. Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan* of September 1945 defining policy in the territories. Nor has there ever been an official statement of policy or a comprehensive directive to the officers of the military government by the Israeli government or the Minister of Defense. The nearest thing to such a statement is an article by Shlomo Gazit (who headed the IMG under Dayan from 1967 to 1974) entitled "The Occupied Territories: Policy and Practice," published in January 1970 in *Ma'arachot*, the monthly of the Israeli army. As a translation of Dayan's general thoughts and wishes into more or less systematic terms, this article is of unique importance in clarifying the nature of IMG policy.

According to Gazit, the Israeli military government has presented to the Arabs in the territories "two assumptions" which they are expected to understand and to accept. The first is that the residents of the territories cannot change their present fate by themselves, and certainly not by force:

> Admittedly they can choose to follow a course of provocation, disobedience, and sabotage, but they will not succeed in that way to overcome Israel, they will only force it to apply preventive security measures and severe penalties.

The second assumption which, Gazit says, the residents must understand is that

> Israel did not engage in the Six-Day War because of its expansionist intentions nor from a desire to rule the Arabs. We entered the military campaign because we were faced with a serious problem of defense which we had to solve. The territories which we occupied were occupied as essential defense positions for Israel, not because of [a desire to rule over] the population residing in them.

Gazit mentions five factors constraining the efforts of the IMG to maintain peaceful and normal life in the area: (1) repeated violations of the cease-fire by the Arab armies and by the terrorist organizations aimed at preventing worldwide acceptance of the new status created by the Six-Day

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War; (2) various resolutions by the United Nations calling for Israel's withdrawal to the lines of June 5, 1967; (3) the fact that Arab military systems have been rehabilitated, and hence that the Arabs entertain the hope of regaining the territories by force; (4) the Palestinian resurgence as a political and military revolutionary force which has an appeal "to every Arab in the territories"; and finally (5) the flow of anti-Israel propaganda coming into the territories from the Arab media.

In contending with "these adverse circumstances" Gazit attaches great significance to the economic situation in the territories. In the short term he regards economic well-being and full employment as factors discouraging terrorism:

> Every resident of the territories is responsible first of all for his own home and family. The need to find a livelihood, the work which fills his day and would not leave free time for illegal activity, and a good economic situation for himself and his family enhance the chance of keeping the individual away from silly actions and will encourage him to continue his regular, calm way of life.

The long-term interests are seen by Gazit as follows:

> Since we do not know when and how the final political solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict will be, and we do not know where the political boundaries dividing us from our neighbors will pass, we can assert today quite confidently that any political settlement which may be achieved would not be able to hold unless it be sustained by a large system of interests on both sides which will operate and maintain pressure for the continuation of the settlement.

Besides economic prosperity, the other main goal of the IMG is normalization. Here, Gazit admits, there is a problem, but he removes the difficulty by introducing a distinction between what he calls the "abstract, philosophical aspect" of living under occupation and the practical, concrete aspect:

> For those [residents of the territories] who yearn for independence, for sovereignty, for a flag, a national anthem, and all the other paraphernalia of statehood—for those, we cannot offer any practical solution. However, as for the other aspect, that is, to what extent the Israeli Military Government changes or affects the ordinary regular way of life of the Arab residents of the territories—here we can do a lot in order to dull the acuteness of the problem.

In order to help "dull the acuteness of the problem," the IMG intends to abide by three principles. The first is "non-presence": the removal of any sign of Israeli rule—the Israeli flag, a military patrol, visible military headquarters. The second is the principle of nonintervention: that the population should administer itself as it wishes. The third, finally, is the principle of "open bridges," which makes it possible for the Arab residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (as well as visitors from all over the Arab world) to move freely into and out of the area.

THE first thing to say about this policy is that one of its three main elements, "non-presence," was impractical from the start. The goal of making the headquarters of the IMG invisible to the population could not possibly be realized. Even though the headquarters were located in police stations in the outskirts of towns, they were still not that far from municipal centers. Dozens, sometimes hundreds, of people came every day to the district HQ. And with the expansion of the towns all over the West Bank since 1967, these buildings soon fell inside the urban areas.

The other aspect of "non-presence"—to have as few military patrols as possible—came to a tragic end in the Gaza Strip about a year after Gazit wrote his article. As the Israeli military presence was reduced in accordance with this principle, armed PLO forces became active. "By the end of 1970," writes one observer, "the *fida'iyin* controlled the camps and, at night, the towns. Grenades were lobbed into marketplaces to disrupt commerce, and at places where people congregated who worked inside Israel, such as post offices, banks, and buses."

Most of the victims were Arabs. Dozens of people accused of "collaboration" were killed; some of the victims had indeed cooperated with the Israeli authorities, but many were killed for other reasons. For a time Dayan insisted that the policy not be changed despite the violence. But then things came to a head. On January 4, 1971, Arab terrorists tossed a hand grenade into an Israeli civilian car which had stopped in one of the streets of Gaza; two infants were killed and their mother seriously wounded. At that point Dayan was forced to order the army back into the Gaza Strip to crack down on the terrorists.

Unlike "non-presence," however, "nonintervention" has to this day remained the guiding principle of the IMG. Obviously nonintervention never did and still does not mean the absence of government involvement from all spheres of life. There are security measures: every person crossing the Jordan bridge into the West Bank (each year about a million people cross in both directions) must undergo a search, and due to security considerations, the import of goods through these bridges is severely restricted. There are also a number of other areas in which there has been direct intervention. In agriculture, Israeli instructors have introduced modern technology and increased by three or four times the average yield per acre. In labor relations, the IMG has issued a regulation requiring employers to insure their employees against accidents both at work and on their way to and from work. In auto insurance, mandatory coverage has been raised to match the Israeli norms. In taxation, when a value-added tax was intro-

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duced in Israel, it was also introduced in the territories.

But these measures were not seen by Dayan and the other proponents of his policy as conflicting with the principles of nonintervention, because they were inertial in character and did not bear directly upon the *political culture* of the Palestinians. It was this that nonintervention was designed to leave untouched, and it emphatically extended to such elements of the political culture of the Palestinians as their "natural" hostility to Israel. As Gazit put it in 1970:

> It is the undisputed right of every Arab to continue to be a nationalist Arab with national awareness, to retain his traditions, religion, and language, to be proud of his past and of his national history. Israel does not have the illusion that it could force anyone to love us, and we certainly do not expect anyone to do it out of sycophancy, hypocrisy, or submissiveness. There is nothing more repugnant to the Israeli Military Government than anything smacking of "quislingism."

The meaning of such an approach becomes clearer when we contrast the Israeli policy in the territories with that of the United States in occupied Japan. The United States openly aimed at changing the political culture of Japan. To this end it instituted a general censorship of all Japanese media, a comprehensive revision of educational curricula and school texts, and a "purge" of public figures, debarring some 220,000 Japanese from public office and from important positions in the private sector.

By contrast, censorship of the Arabic press, which is published in East Jerusalem and distributed in the territories as well as in Israel, is restricted only to military and security matters. Editors do not have to get prior approval for the publication of the whole paper; they only have to show the censor those items which they consider problematic from a security angle. The tenor of the Arab papers is openly pro-PLO. The Israelis do not look into the sources of the papers' financial support. Pro-PLO editorials are permitted, and only overt and direct incitement to violence is prohibited. Sometimes editors get around this prohibition too. A paper might come out with a front-page headline, "The Merchants of Nablus Are Striking Today," and since the papers are distributed a couple of hours before the opening of the stores, this "news" item serves as a call for a strike.

As for education: although Jordanian school texts were replete with anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish materials, nonetheless, according to Dayan's biographer (and admirer) Shabtai Teveth, the IMG decided "not to censor [from the Jordanian school texts used in the West Bank] historical facts, even if their symbolic significance [in the textbook] was not palatable, nor to censor anti-Jewish sentiments extant since ancient Islam; and not to censor general slogans about homeland and nation, which were the essence of nationalistic education." Hence, sentences such as "I will not forget Jaffa as long as I live," "This is the weapon that will liberate our plundered homeland," or "Holy War is obligatory" (included in grammar books as model sentences) were not censored. Geography books, maps, and atlases used in the schools of the West Bank to this day do not contain Israel's name.

The most concrete aspect of the nonintervention policy had to do with the flow of funds into the occupied territories. Initially Dayan did not allow the transfer of Jordanian government money into the West Bank, fearing rightly that this money would serve to undermine Israel's position in the area. In the first months after Israel took over, he prohibited local government officials from receiving salaries from the Jordanian government. "Salary couriers" caught crossing the bridges from Jordan were arrested, as were the recipients whose names were found in the lists of the couriers. However, the flow of salaries from Amman to the government employees in the West Bank was hard to stop, and in the end Dayan decided that it was not worth the effort.

A policy of preventing West Bank municipalities from receiving financial support from Jordan in the form of loans and grants was maintained by Dayan until the end of 1973. From then on, however, it became an established Israeli policy to allow the free influx of money. At first the funds were controlled by Jordan, but after 1977 they were increasingly controlled by the PLO. Responding to a question on this issue (in 1978), the then Minister of Defense Ezer Weizman announced, "It does not matter that they get money from the PLO, as long as they do not build arms factories with it."

Thanks to this attitude, in the past five years alone (as was revealed just a few months ago by Dr. Fu'ad Bisisu, Secretary of the Joint PLO-Jordan Committee), a total of $436 million was funneled into the territories. And PLO chairman Yasir Arafat recently announced, "There is no problem in transferring funds [into the territories]; they are brought in legally."

Finally, and again in striking contrast to analogous American practices in occupied Japan, the IMG has tolerated anti-Israel and pro-PLO political action. Thus, to cite one example of many, the IMG did not prevent the pro-PLO groups in the West Bank from organizing a series of public rallies at which the Camp David accords signaling peace between Israel and Egypt were denounced just after they were signed, and at which the speakers called for the elimination of all the "traitors" who supported these accords.

In short, nonintervention, the self-imposed requirement of the IMG that it remain politically neutral, has had the effect of permitting the growth of PLO influence. As Aryeh Shalev (the Commander of Judea and Samaria, 1974-76) has

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said of this policy: "Had the aim been to prevent PLO influence in the territories, then I think [one could say] that we failed, but there was never such an aim." Indeed, not only has the IMG conspicuously refrained from any attempt to curtail PLO influence, it has also refrained from any attempt to encourage the formation of alternative political forces to the PLO among the population of the West Bank.

GIVEN these consequences of the policy of nonintervention, an insistent question naturally presents itself: what, beyond economic prosperity and "normalization," has been Israel's long-term goal in the territories?

The goal desired by Prime Minister Eshkol and his colleagues Sapir and Eban in the late 1960's was eventually to negotiate a territorial compromise with Jordan, as it was also the goal of Prime Minister Rabin (1974-77). But this was *not* the goal of Dayan, who determined what actually happened in the territories and who declared many times that he did not view a political agreement with Jordan as a feasible solution.

Many observers of IMG policy believe that Dayan, shunning the notion of territorial compromise, was instead trying to build the foundations of some kind of partnership or condominium with Jordan in the West Bank. The retention of Jordanian law, Jordanian educational curriculum, and Jordanian currency, as well as the "open bridges," are all cited to support this thesis. However, Shlomo Gazit has a different interpretation of these matters, considering them aspects of the principle of nonintervention. Gazit, who was intimately familiar with Dayan's plans, knows well that what some have regarded as a consciously designed (if officially undeclared) policy of cooperation between Israel and Jordan in the administration of the West Bank was simply the consequence of Israeli acquiescence in Jordan's involvement in affairs there. A line of action thus pursued may also be a policy of sorts, but such unintended policy should certainly be distinguished from deliberate policy.

Dayan's initial purpose, according to his directive, was "to bring about a separation between Jordan and the West Bank," "to prevent political contacts and the smuggling of money," and specifically, as we have seen, "to prevent the distribution of salaries from Jordan." When he reversed his orders on Jordanian salaries and, later, on Jordanian financial support to the municipalities, he did so in response to pressure from within the territories. His attitude toward Jordan as a state remained on the whole negative—for instance, he was reportedly opposed to Israel's complying with an American request in September 1970 to mobilize the Israeli air force against a Syrian invasion of Jordan that threatened to topple Hussein's regime—and it was he who reportedly brought an end to the secret government contacts with King Hussein in August 1977. This could hardly be the attitude of one interested in establishing a condominium with Jordan in the West Bank.

As for Dayan's thinking about a prospective role for the Palestinians in a future political settlement, here matters become most confusing. Gazit, in his 1970 presentation of IMG policy, does not mention the term Palestinians at all. This omission reflects a fundamental assumption, never spelled out in Gazit's article but crucial to an understanding of Israeli behavior in the territories. A long-standing article of faith among Israeli policy-makers has been that when Israel reaches a political settlement with the Arabs, it will come in the form of an agreement struck between Israel on the one hand and the Arab states on the other. The Palestinian issue, in this view, is part and parcel of, and inseparable from, the larger conflict; the Palestinians in the territories, who depend politically on the Arab states, are simply unable on their own to play a role in any political process which might lead to a peace agreement. This idea helps to explain the liberal attitude taken by the IMG toward the pro-PLO stance of local West Bank leaders—the positions of those leaders have simply been considered of no real consequence.

In a book published last year, however, Shlomo Gazit has disclosed that there was an element of conscious intention at work here as well. In addition to the principle of nonintervention, he now writes, another persistent principle of the IMG was that "Israel should *prevent* the population of the territories from participating in shaping the political future of the area and they should not be seen as party to negotiations with Israel" (emphasis added).

This is a striking and revealing statement, to the best of my knowledge the first public acknowledgment by a proponent of the IMG that its approach to the issue of a possible role for the Palestinians was a matter of deliberate policy. Israeli critics of IMG policy used to attack it for slighting the potential role of the Palestinians in the peace process and underestimating their political significance. Defenders of the IMG would retort that these critics were being unrealistic, and that all the IMG was doing was accepting the objective situation. Gazit's statement that one of the principles of the IMG was to prevent the population from participating in the political process discloses that the policy was in fact directed at ensuring that the assessment of the presumed political insignificance of the Palestinians in the territories would be proved right. In other words, this assessment was intended to be a self-fulfilling one.

BUT if both Jordan and the Palestinians were excluded as possible partners to a negotiated agreement, what then was the overall plan which Dayan's nonintervention policy in the territories was meant to serve?

It would seem that Dayan had no conception of a peaceful solution to the conflict. Once, in ex-

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plaining the state of relations to which he aspired between Israel and the Arabs, he invoked the following image: "like the land and the sea, with waves invading the land and the land entering into the waves. . . ." The simile was meant to suggest a condition of coexistence and integration, but it also suggests, significantly, a never-ending struggle between natural forces. Thus—and notwithstanding the derision in which he used to hold his indecisive colleagues—Dayan nevertheless, as Gazit writes, "basically agreed to the then government policy not to decide," and prevented any discussion within the General Staff and within the IMG of plans for a political settlement.

According to a recent book by Abraham Schweitzer, a leading Israeli political analyst, Dayan believed that the pattern of life he was establishing in the territories "could last forever." Schweitzer, a former supporter of Dayan, now regards his actions in the territories as vacillating and equivocal. And so indeed they were, though this fact was often obfuscated by rhetoric. Shlomo Gazit could write in 1970 that the occupation of the territories represented an opportunity to influence "the whole complex of relations and contacts between us and the Arabs residing in the territories, and in this way, indirectly, also between us and the Arab mass surrounding Israel," but this, though it may have reflected a benevolent hope, was surely not a defined goal. Shmuel Goren, the present Coordinator of Government Operations in the territories, was being more truthful when he said, bluntly: "We have been assigned a policy for dealing with the population. I am not speaking about a political goal—which does not exist—but [about] the day-to-day dealing with this complex population."

Of course, where there is no larger goal to be achieved there can be no failure. Thus, summing up seventeen years of the Israeli Military Government, Gazit has said:

> One can describe the Israeli policy in the territories as a success story. . . . Israel continues to hold the territories and rule over their population, while the burden resulting from it is minimal, neither an unbearable security burden nor an economic burden nor even—as far as the local Arab population is concerned—a political burden.

Is this true? Gazit's statement that Israel's control over the territories has not brought about an economic burden can on the whole be accepted. The question of security is controversial, but it is nevertheless the case that the burden here is not unbearable. But when it comes to the question of the political burden, even when qualified by the clause "as far as it concerns the local Arab population," it is difficult to accept Gazit's evaluation, even in terms of the limited aims defined by the architects of the policy.

Elsewhere Gazit has explained that "one of the cornerstones of the policy of the IMG was the desire to manage the territories in such a way that the government . . . would be free to choose any direction [it might want]." In the Camp David Framework for Peace in the Middle East, the government actually chose a direction, involving the institution of Palestinian autonomy in the territories for an interim period of five years. Yet this choice was absolutely untenable without active participation by the Palestinians in the territories. It is ironic that Dayan, the architect of the policy of the IMG, was also one of the architects of the Camp David accords. For to champion the Camp David accords (which provide for the participation of representatives of the Palestinians in the negotiations) and simultaneously to maintain that these people cannot, or should not, participate in determining the future of the area was either an absurdity or a deception.

DURING my own brief tenure as Head of the Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria (November 1, 1981 to September 22, 1982), I tried to implement a new and very different policy. Instead of assuming that the Palestinians in the territories could not or should not play a role in the political process, the new policy assumed that they could and should; instead of the requirement that the IMG remain "neutral," the IMG would actively attempt to curtail PLO influence and simultaneously encourage those Palestinians who openly recognized Israel. There was a clear political goal to this policy: to develop conditions conducive to the emergence of Palestinian leaders ready for peace negotiations.

No sooner had I myself left office, however, than this new approach was discarded and the old one reinstated. One incident tells the story. A group of young Palestinians who had become politically active during my period laid the groundwork for a new political organization, the Palestinian Democratic Movement for Peace, calling for negotiations with Israel. Several months after my resignation, the IMG forbade them from holding a rally at which they planned to announce the official establishment of their party and ordered them to stop their political activity. Here, in other words, was a case in which the IMG actively prevented a development that might have signaled at least a challenge to the existing political culture, and in effect extended its protection to that culture.

A few months later, when a large group of West Bank personalities informed the IMG of their intention to go to Amman to meet Arafat (in fact to affirm their allegiance to him), the IMG gave its permission. Similarly, the restrictions imposed by my administration on the transfer of PLO money were abolished after my resignation, first in practice and later formally.

Thus we see again how a policy with no larger goal than that of perpetuating itself in an orderly fashion, and thereby—it was hoped—laying the basis of some form of coexistence between Pales-

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tinians and Israelis, has had the effect of augmenting and consolidating the influence of those forces most opposed to coexistence and bent on a radical and violent course of action to undo it.

As far back as 1970 Shimon Peres wrote: "Certainly, no political solution is possible so long as there are no West Bank Arab leaders prepared to step forward and publicly declare their readiness to reach one." In 1982 Yitzhak Rabin observed that the emergence of Palestinian leaders in the West Bank who were openly ready for negotiations with Israel must be seen as a necessary precondition for progress toward peace, whether it be peace according to the plan of Labor or of Likud. Today Peres is Prime Minister and Rabin is Minister of Defense. Are they likely to adopt an active policy, deviating from the established principle of nonintervention, in order to encourage the emergence of such Palestinian leadership? The answer is: most probably not.

The reality of the current National Unity government discourages initiatives aimed at breaking the stalemate in the peace process, because the two major parties have conflicting ideas about the future disposition of the territories. Some critics of the policy of nonintervention argue (much as Rabin did in 1982) that the breaking of PLO political dominance in the area is a necessary precondition for either a Labor-style solution (negotiated agreement on territorial compromise) or a Likud-style solution (limited administrative autonomy). This is a logical argument, but unfortunately it is politically naive. Neither party is likely to agree on an active policy which can be perceived as advancing the political program of its adversary.

In dealing with the security problems in the territories, both Labor and Likud prefer, for different reasons, to focus on anti-terrorism rather than to engage in a larger struggle against the PLO's political influence. Likud leaders not only view the emergence of a non-PLO leadership which might agree to peace negotiations as a threat to continued Israeli control over the West Bank; they are also wary of the ideological implications of a struggle directed at the PLO as a political force and not merely as a terrorist group. Such a struggle implies that there is a Palestinian problem, that there is a Palestinian people. It may even suggest that if the PLO recognizes Israel, it will be acceptable as a partner to peace negotiations. All of these propositions are unacceptable to Likud spokesmen.

Labor ministers are not likely to consider a shift from the nonintervention principle to a political struggle against the PLO and the encouragement of a non-PLO alternative because it might entail immediate political costs. Such an initiative would certainly raise objections on the part of many in the Israeli Left and in Labor itself. In order to calm liberal objections, Labor leaders would have to explain the long-range goal—namely, a territorial compromise—but in stressing the "dovish" purpose of the interventionist approach, Labor leaders would anger Likud and the annexationists within their own party. Labor's European friends in the Socialist International all recognize the PLO and while Labor could justify to them Israel's struggle against terrorism as such, it would find it more difficult to justify a political struggle aimed at breaking the PLO's dominance in the territories. The same applies to the Western liberal media.

Finally, although the present situation may make it impossible for the Palestinians in the territories to institutionalize an autonomous national community, the Arab elite in these areas also tacitly supports continuation of the status quo.

The core of this elite is made up of some seventy rich urban families with strong concrete ties to the Arab world (especially Jordan and the oil countries) in the shape of financial investments, trade connections, and relatives in high government posts. Hence, members of this elite (the "notables") prefer not to make decisions which are likely to arouse opposition in Arab capitals. They are not politically inactive, but their role is ancillary and peripheral. Toeing the line of the Arab "consensus," they tune their public statements to the signals received from the centers of this consensus—Amman, Beirut (until 1982), Riyadh, or Tunis. Privately they criticize the consensus as a paralyzing factor, but they will not defy it publicly. They are embittered and politically frustrated. They complain about their situation under Israeli rule, which seems to be precisely what everybody (including the Israelis) expects them to do. They are not pleased with the status quo, but they will not take the initiative to change it. Their national pride is hurt, but their material interests are not. The current Israeli approach is therefore compatible with their own preference for political peripherality.

Thus, while Israel's policy in the territories has not succeeded in creating a "new pattern of coexistence," as some of its proponents hoped, it has represented for both Israeli policy-makers and the Palestinian elite the path of least resistance, which is the path generally preferred by politicians everywhere.

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Therefore Choose Death?

Paul S. Appelbaum and Joel Klein

LIKE the serpent that coils around the staff of Aesculapius, the god of healing, contemporary law is now thoroughly intertwined with the practice of medicine. The effects of this entanglement, a recent development in the histories of both disciplines, are apparent in each camp, as judges decide when life-sustaining treatment should be terminated, and physicians struggle to define "patients' rights." Some of the more subtle yet potentially more profound consequences of the interaction of law and medicine, however, have gone largely unremarked. One of the most unsettling of those developments is the abandonment by the medical profession of an unambivalent commitment to the treatment of the ill.

The signs of this change can be discerned in the medical literature and are echoed in physicians' discussions in hallways and cafeterias. Medical journals contain suggestions designed to make it easier for pediatricians to determine when babies with ameliorable congenital anomalies, such as Down's Syndrome with malformation of the esophagus, or malformations of the spinal cord (myelomeningocele), should be allowed to die rather than receive treatment. Physicians talk about whether it is even worthwhile attempting to save the latest alcoholic admitted with bleeding in his gut or severe deterioration of the liver. Studies show that patients who refuse a recommendation for treatment may be discharged from the hospital, sometimes to almost certain deterioration and death, with little or no effort made to change their minds.

The contribution of law to this turn of affairs stems from the Supreme Court's creation of a constitutional basis for the right of individual autonomy (or "privacy," as the courts are wont to call it) in the contraception and abortion cases little more than a decade ago. It turns out, as Archibald Cox said of equality, that autonomy once loosed is not easily cabined. Endorsed by liberals and libertarians alike, autonomy has been promoted by the courts as the predominant value in medical decision-making, with important effects on the willingness of physicians to treat the seriously ill. But legal notions of autonomy were in part built on and later reinforced by the idea developed by some physicians and bioethicists that there is a minimum quality of life below which life itself is not worth living. Both ideas developed in the context of the treatment of the terminally ill, but, interacting in a perverse fashion, have since spread to the rest of medical care. The evolution of these lines of thought, and their effects, are well worth considering.

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II

A RETHINKING of our traditional assumptions about health care was stimulated by the development in the 1950's and 1960's of improved means to sustain life in the seriously ill. The introduction of respirators, pacemakers, and intravenous and intragastric feeding techniques meant that lives could be supported even beyond the failure of patients' abilities to breathe, to trigger contractions of their hearts, and to swallow food. Patients who previously would have died rapidly could now be sustained for substantially longer periods, in some cases indefinitely.

Although these advances were of clear benefit to many people, allowing them to survive acute episodes of severe illness long enough for treatment to take effect, troubling issues soon began to be apparent. The respirator that could be used to support a victim of smoke inhalation while his lungs recovered from the trauma they had suffered could equally well be employed to sustain the life of a comatose patient with widely disseminated cancer, whose death without recovery of consciousness was only a matter of time. Since situations of this sort had never existed before, and the medical profession had traditionally prided itself on its devotion to prolonging life whenever possible, the initial tendency was for physicians to use the new techniques indiscriminately in both types of cases.

Dissatisfaction with this approach was quickly manifested. Many physicians, as well as family members, were distressed at the prospect of supporting people whose lives promised only continued suffering before an imminent and inevitable demise. More generally, as the escalating costs of

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medical care began to press against the limits of available resources, it became harder to justify the money spent on prolonging the dying process. In response to these concerns, efforts were made to develop criteria for deciding when initiation of life support was improper or its discontinuation desirable.

But these efforts also proved problematic. Most of those involved in the process could agree on criteria to be employed in clear-cut instances, such as when death from an underlying disease was imminent. But the borderline cases were less easily resolved. What of patients, for example, who had suffered massive strokes and would never regain consciousness, but for whom indefinite support on a respirator was a possibility? As is inevitable in the United States today, in the absence of a social consensus on how to resolve these issues, physicians and families alike turned to the courts.

Karen Ann Quinlan became the symbol of the dilemmas created by the new technology. Rendered permanently comatose, apparently by an injudicious combination of alcohol and drugs, the young woman was declared by her physicians to be unlikely to regain consciousness or ever to breathe on her own. Nonetheless, she was considered indefinitely supportable with the assistance of a respirator. The artificial prolongation of her non-sentient life seemed wrong to her father, who unsuccessfully asked her physicians to turn off her respirator; to the representatives of the Catholic Church consulted by Mr. Quinlan; and ultimately to the justices of the New Jersey Supreme Court. By the time the case reached New Jersey's highest court in early 1976, it had attracted national attention. The justices were challenged to go beyond their intuitions to render a decision, buttressed by principled argumentation, to discontinue respiratory support.

So in the name of righting the wrong being done to Karen Ann Quinlan, Chief Justice Hughes began the process of stripping away those values that might lead to a conclusion that the young woman's life should be sustained. For this purpose, he endowed Miss Quinlan's right of individual autonomy with a potency derived from recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions in the area of privacy. In espousing her right to choose, the Chief Justice concluded—based on testimony from the woman's parents as well as his own suppositions—that "if Karen were herself miraculously lucid for an interval," she would "decide upon discontinuance of the life-support apparatus, even it it meant the prospect of natural death." Having assumed the unknowable, the court next tackled the task of overcoming "competing" interests that appeared to counsel against shutting off the respirator.

Might one maintain that the state had an interest in sustaining the life of Karen Ann Quinlan? The court concluded that whatever interests the state had in "the preservation and sanctity of human life" were diminished by Miss Quinlan's poor prognosis (here the court focused on her prognosis "to resume cognitive life," rather than the likelihood that death would supervene) and the degree of bodily invasion necessary to support her. "Ultimately," the court concluded, "there comes a point at which the individual's rights overcome the state interest. It is for that reason that we believe Karen's choice [to stop the respirator], if she were competent to make it, would be vindicated by the law."

Could it be argued that the ethics of the medical profession would be so offended by an order permitting termination of treatment that the state ought not to allow it to take place? Miss Quinlan's attending physicians, supported by "several qualified experts who testified in the case," had contended that removing the respirator "would not conform with medical practices, standards, and traditions." The court brushed this concern aside, however, concluding that "the interests of the patient . . . must be evaluated by the court as predominant, even in the face of an opinion *contra* by the present attending physicians." Elsewhere in the decision the court suggested that the physicians might have been influenced in their opinions by their fear of malpractice liability if they had agreed to remove respiratory support, a factor portrayed as contaminating their decisions with "less than worthy motivations."

In as simple a manner as that, the New Jersey Supreme Court disposed of two major impediments to the termination of life support, which in this case rested on the court's interpretation of the value of autonomy. Courts that have considered the issues since—and a steady stream of doctors, lawyers, and anguished family members have trudged into courtrooms to resolve these cases—have largely echoed the *Quinlan* court's approach. The right of autonomy is held to be paramount; it is presumed that patients would or should choose to have their respirators turned off or similar life support withheld; and decisions are rendered in favor of withholding care. When values other than those addressed by the *Quinlan* court are raised, such as the interests of families, they too are vanquished in favor of autonomy.*

WHATEVER might be said of the legal basis for the right of autonomy or the wisdom of its various applications, it should not go unremarked that the courts' reliance on the principle has resulted in a counterintuitive use of the term. By definition, one would suppose, the exercise of autonomy depends on an individual's

* The supreme irony in the Quinlan case is that contrary to the expectation of her physicians, Karen Ann Quinlan began to breathe on her own after her respirator was turned off. Although she never regained consciousness, she lived until June 1985, more than nine years after the New Jersey court ruled that her autonomous choice would have been to die.

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ability to make at least minimally reasoned choices. When that capacity is lacking—because of infancy, mental incompetence, or unconsciousness—it would seem that the concept of autonomy should have little significance. Invariably in such situations, someone else must be responsible for making choices that are usually left to autonomous individuals. But this has not deterred the courts from relying on the right of autonomy to support decisions concerning people who are unable to decide for themselves. Thus, in a now established line of cases, it has been held that incompetent and unconscious patients have a "right to refuse" medical treatments that could restore their competence or sustain their lives.

The use of autonomy to support these decisions is puzzling. Death, after all, is the ultimate insult to autonomous decision-making. But the courts have been less concerned in these cases with honoring lay understandings than with finding a tool that might enable them to achieve the result they see as just. The peculiar spin accorded to the principle of autonomy, however, accounts for some of the unexpected effects of the decisions.

The efforts of the courts have generally been accorded a warm reception among bioethicists. The latter, often philosophers or theologians who have spent some time in medical settings, are having an increasing influence on both judicial and medical considerations of issues such as termination of life-sustaining care. Most bioethicists consider autonomy a primary value. Often this belief rests on some combination of Kantian philosophy and libertarian political principles. But regardless of its theoretical origins, the value of autonomy in decision-making has been popularized among medical professionals by bioethicists, thus reinforcing the importance attached to individual choice by judicial decisions. Nor are most bioethicists disturbed by the interpretation of autonomy offered by the courts, namely, that autonomy is to be interpreted as a right to die rather than as a right to live. They too seem more concerned with the need to end the suffering of the dying than with any desire for logical consistency in the use of terms.

III

INDEPENDENTLY of the attempts by the courts to resolve the difficult issues of when treatment should be withheld, the medical profession had been coming to some conclusions of its own on the matter. Autonomy of patient choice is not a value that historically has been held in high esteem by physicians, who have often believed that they are better able to determine how patients should be treated than are patients themselves. Thus, the path taken by the courts was not one that physicians would have chosen on their own. But they too had recognized the need to justify removing respirators and withholding chemotherapy in cases where continued suffering seemed the only likely outcome of treatment.

Rather than looking to abstract notions of autonomy and privacy, physicians instinctively turned to the issue of the quality of patients' lives. It seemed apparent to them that patients surviving on respirators, unaware of what was occurring around them, curled into shrunken balls on their hospital beds, were living lives that were in some sense not worth enduring. The point at which someone's life could be characterized in this way was difficult for most physicians to describe abstractly, the determination depending as it did on a rather subjective analysis of risks and benefits. But like the late Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, who is often remembered for his "I-know-it-when-I-see-it" approach to defining pornography, many physicians felt that they too knew when a life was no longer worth the effort to live.

By the time Karen Ann Quinlan's case reached the courts, then, physicians had already begun backing away from the belief that all available means of sustaining life ought to be employed in every circumstance. The *Quinlan* court was able to cite a body of literature in medical and legal journals indicating "that physicians distinguish between curing the ill and comforting and easing the dying; that they refuse to treat the curable as if they were dying or ought to die; and that they have sometimes refused to treat the hopeless and dying as if they were curable." Thus, the court's willingness to see Miss Quinlan's respirator turned off appeared to be supported by the thrust of medical opinion.

This, however, was something of a misinterpretation, since most physicians—including all those who testified in the *Quinlan* case—were not yet ready to take that step. And even those who would have taken it were driven by quality-of-life considerations, not by respect for a patient's decisional autonomy. A later case decided by the Massachusetts Supreme Court, which involved the question of whether an elderly, profoundly retarded man named Joseph Saikewicz should be given chemotherapy for leukemia, addressed this difference of view explicitly. The court concluded that the chemotherapy should not be given because the patient lacked the ability to comprehend the reason for the pain he would have to endure. Much as in the *Quinlan* case, the *Saikewicz* court rested its holding on the belief that this would have been the course the patient would have chosen had he been competent to make the choice. The court went further, however, taking pains to emphasize that "to the extent that this formulation equates the value of life with any measure of the quality of life, we firmly reject it."

Yet physicians and bioethicists took this assertion at somewhat less than face value. Despite the tortured efforts of the courts to avoid making decisions based on quality of life—for to do so, in their view, would deny an equality of rights un-

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der law—many observers concluded that this was precisely what the courts were doing. It was pointed out, for example, that almost no competent persons able to make their own decisions ever refuse initial trials of chemotherapy for leukemia. Thus, if the Massachusetts court was willing to ascribe such a decision to Saikewicz, it could only be because the quality of his life if he were to undergo treatment would be so much worse, by virtue of his inability to comprehend what was occurring, than the life of a non-retarded person. Even if one were to accept the court's protestations to the contrary, it was evident to everyone that most court decisions allowing termination of life-sustaining treatment were being decided precisely as they would be if a rough quality-of-life standard were being applied. Physicians, therefore, felt that the courts were implicitly endorsing their approach to decision-making, and the use of a quality-of-life standard spread.

IV

It is not difficult to find elements to criticize in the decisions of the courts. Since judges were motivated by the desire to justify a particular outcome rather than by any internal logic arising from the relevant legal principles, their arguments were often strained and self-contradictory. Similarly, even in situations of terminal illness, there were obvious problems when physicians adhered to quality-of-life standards, with the latitude they give to bias about the relative value of people's lives. But both judges and physicians were confronted with situations that seemed to cry out for relief, and they did what they could to provide it. The problem is that these decisions in the extreme cases began to legitimate a logic and soon a set of practices that took on a momentum of their own. In particular they had a powerful effect on the thinking of doctors, who have of course continued to shape treatment decisions in the vast majority of cases that never reach the courts.

Traditionally, medical training has emphasized the value of immense efforts to promote health and save life. Medical students begin to absorb this ethos as they start their clinical education on hospital wards, routinely working 100-hour weeks. Shifts may last 36 hours, with 8 to 12 hours in between. Things get somewhat better when training is completed, but physicians in many specialties, even when out of the hospital, are perpetually on call. Medicine of this sort is an all-consuming commitment.

Time is not the only thing that physicians learn to surrender to their profession. On the job, great stress is placed on giving meticulous attention to the details of patient care. Charts and test results must be reviewed, patients examined, orders written, and all done now. Pushing things aside for consideration tomorrow is looked on as a sign of disreputable laziness on the part of a trainee or practicing physician. This is not to say that dedication alone produces medical care that is always technically competent or favorably received by patients. To some extent, in fact, the frantic pace inculcated into medical students early in their training yields physicians who have too little time to sit with patients, learning their needs and responding accordingly. But when it comes to the treatment of serious illness, most patients are reassured by the thought that their physicians will do everything possible to effect their cure, and will do so with unimpeachable intensity.

To be able to respond with this level of dedication, however, one must have an ethic that is powerfully motivating. The belief that all illness is worth treating and all life worth saving is such an ethic, and its success in encouraging physicians' efforts has been evident for many years. Now, however, as a result of the problems raised initially by our new capacities to sustain the terminally ill, the orientation of physicians toward health rather than illness, and life rather than death, it is beginning to break down. Confronted by doubts about the validity of their ethic, which they have already been told is not universally applicable, in a growing number of cases physicians are starting to back away from their commitment to treatment.

A recent case history, taken from a study conducted for the President's Commission on Ethical Problems in Medicine, illustrates this phenomenon. A middle-aged male patient was admitted to the hospital for evaluation of a mass in his lung. When a diagnosis of malignancy was made, his physicians recommended surgery to remove that lobule of the lung where the tumor was lodged. There was no evidence that the tumor had already spread beyond the lung; thus, surgical cure remained a possibility. The patient's wife, however, who spoke for the patient, reported that he did not desire to undergo the operation and preferred to be discharged from the hospital; he might later consider radiotherapy or chemotherapy, neither of which offered the possibility of cure. His physicians, murmuring something about a patient's right to individual choice, allowed him to go home.

The researchers performing the study were curious about why the patient and his wife would refuse potentially life-saving care. Discussions with the wife revealed first that the decision had been hers, not her husband's, because he habitually left all important choices to her. Furthermore, her reasoning was based on the firm belief that exposing cancer to air would cause it to spread. She believed, therefore, that the only means of saving her husband's life was to stop the surgery from taking place, the precise opposite of the medical reality.

What happened in this case? Had the physicians taken the time to learn why the patient's wife was refusing treatment on his behalf, they

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might have had a chance to reverse the unfortunate decision. That they did not make an effort to persuade the patient's wife of the incorrectness of her choice might be attributed in part to her unpleasant and aggressive tone, and the general press of other patients' needs. But the physicians never even took the time to inquire about the basis for her decision, a step preliminary to any effective intervention. The reason they gave for their failure in this regard was the feeling that patients have the right to make their own choices, even if they are bad choices (the courts have emphasized that repeatedly), and that it would be improper for physicians to challenge this right.

The shift seen in this case—from a dedication to persuading patients of the importance of treatment to a willingness to stand back while patients make bad choices of their own—is repeated day after day in hospitals and doctors' offices. To the judges issuing high-sounding opinions about patient autonomy, this rejection of the physician's duty to take the extra step to ensure that a patient will be treated must have been entirely unanticipated. Similarly, the popular media, and particularly the New York *Times*, which have been so concerned with safeguarding the patient's "right to die," have apparently remained unaware of this side-effect of the right they have promoted.

A look at the psychology of physicians, however, renders the phenomenon quite understandable. For the vast majority of doctors, dedication to patient care has served to restrain other, potentially conflicting, impulses. These include the desire to avoid unpleasant situations, like wrestling with a drunk in the emergency room while trying to stitch the gash he received during a barroom brawl; the longing to get home at a reasonable hour to spend some time with one's family; the pressure to let normal emotions reach the surface, including anger at obnoxious patients or frustration at those who stymie their own care. All these, with occasional and unfortunate exceptions, have been held in check by the devotion to the higher ethic of medicine, the treatment of disease.

But when health is reduced to one value among many, and death is often seen as preferable to life, the pent-up emotions of the medical profession burst through the bonds that have restrained them. Doctors discover that it is simply easier to let people refuse care than to struggle with them; to leave at five o'clock rather than to work through the night (it is not economic motivations alone that have led so many physicians to join multi-doctor clinics, which advertise in medical journals the "life-style" advantages they offer); to get angry and yell back when patients are rude. Predictably, perhaps, there is now a case in Georgia where a patient is suing for the intentional infliction of emotional distress because his doctor told him, "I don't have to be your damn doctor," and, "If only your smart-ass wife would keep her mouth shut." Doctors have found out that it is easier not to play God, and still easier not even to play doctor.

V

While the medical profession can attempt to blame this state of affairs on the courts for their interpretation of the value of individual autonomy, physicians must shoulder their share of responsibility for the intrusion of quality-of-life issues into routine medical care. Once the barrier was broken to the introduction of these considerations in cases involving the terminally ill, and their legitimacy reinforced by the unstated but transparent logic of the court decisions on discontinuing care, physicians became conditioned to thinking about the value of the lives they were attempting to save. Not surprisingly, when the question was asked in this way, the value of treatment sometimes began to seem less than the costs of the effort that was required.

The quality-of-life question, or, to put it non-euphemistically, the question of whether a patient's life is worth saving, is now a commonly considered subject in medical journals. A controversial report in *Pediatrics*, for example, details the protocol employed by doctors in Oklahoma to decide which newborns with defects of the vertebrae and spinal cord should be treated. The physicians endorse a pseudo-mathematical formula according to which quality of life is held to equal the patient's natural endowment multiplied by the sum of the contributions from the home and social environments. When the team caring for a newborn infant, plugging its medical and social criteria into the quality-of-life "equation," decides that the baby's quality of life is below that level at which life should be sustained, "the family is informed that we do not consider them obligated to have the baby treated." Needless to say, the physicians themselves do not feel "obligated" to provide treatment, either. In explanation of the practice, the physicians offer the following thoughts: "[L]ife [is] a basic and precious good, but only a relative good. It is not to be sustained in the face of extraordinary hardships; these hardships can include physical, geographical, and financial considerations."*

The implications of this statement of principles are chilling. Lives that are too troublesome to maintain, too costly to support, of too little perceived value to the decision-maker, can be abandoned. If this approach were limited to a single team of physicians with idiosyncratic ideas about the value of human life, it might be dismissed with scorn. But in fact such approaches have permeated medical thought today, at both ends of

* For a fuller discussion of this report, see "Infanticide & Its Apologists," by Mary Tedeschi, COMMENTARY, November 1984—ED.

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the spectrum of life and everywhere in between. Reports from nursing homes explain how demented, but hardly terminal, patients with fevers are allowed to die without treatment if their quality of life is sufficiently low. A distinguished panel of physicians declares in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that "Severely and irreversibly demented patients need only care given to make them comfortable," while for "pleasantly senile" patients, "Freedom from discomfort [rather than effective treatment of their illness] should be an overriding objective." And the American Medical Association, joined by the American Hospital Association, is currently before the U.S. Supreme Court arguing that the federal government has no right to monitor or intervene in so-called "Baby Doe" cases when physicians and families decide to withhold life-sustaining treatment from seriously retarded or deformed infants.

In sum, having sanctioned the consideration of quality-of-life issues, physicians are now faced with judgments at every turn as to whether a given patient's life is worth saving. One does not need the support of empirical studies (although they exist) to know that the judgments of physicians as to the quality of any patient's life are likely to be highly variable: what looks like quality to one may fall well below the standards of another. Interestingly, one study has shown that physicians who invoke the phrase "quality of life" in their decision-making do so significantly more often to justify withholding care than to support giving it. Younger physicians, having grown to professional maturity in an environment in which decisions to terminate life-sustaining care on quality-of-life grounds were becoming common, may be more prone to using such determinations in deciding whether or not to treat their patients. Looking at the issuance of "do not resuscitate" orders for hospitalized patients, researchers have found residents in training much more inclined to write such orders than older, attending physicians.

One physician summed up the situation this way:

> [T]he old, chronically ill, debilitated, or mentally impaired do not receive the same level of aggressive medical evaluation and treatment as do the young, acutely ill, and mentally normal. We do not discuss this reality or debate its ethics, but the fact remains that many patients are allowed to die by the withholding of "all available care." There seems to be, however, a general denial of this reality.

VI

One need not be an absolutist on right-to-life questions to be concerned about these developments. On the contrary, to propose to address the problem of therapeutic nihilism by compelling physicians to sustain life by whatever means necessary, even when death is imminent and its delay can only be achieved at the cost of great suffering, simply trades one unpleasant situation for another. Yet it is sobering to reflect that those who warned us, when we began finding justifications for discontinuing care in terminally ill patients, that we were heading for a tumble down a slippery slope were right. It may not be impossible to draw distinctions between the cases of terminally ill persons and those who are not on the verge of death, but at the least it is an extraordinarily difficult task.

Although the problem will not be easily eliminated, there may be some ways to ameliorate the effects of this revolution in medical ethics. Insufficient attention has been given to interests that may conflict with current tendencies to discontinue care. For the sake of an easy solution in cases like *Quinlan* and *Saikewicz*, the courts have been too quick to assume the answer to the unknowable question of what a patient would do if able to make the choice, and then too willing to dismiss the stake of society in the maintenance of life. Yet clearly we all have very real interests in perpetuating a vision of our society as a community in which the health and life of our fellows are of importance to all of us. The diminution of our willingness to undergo sacrifices—whether of time, effort, or money—to sustain each other's lives cannot but reduce societal cohesion. For the same reason, only on a more intimate level, family members have real interests (perhaps sometimes subject to conflicts, but less often than one might glean from the court opinions) in seeing their loved ones healed and sustained.

The decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Court in the *Richard Roe* case suggests—by the very unreasonableness of the opinion—where the courts might begin to alter their approaches. Roe was a troubled youth. He abused alcohol and dangerous drugs, became violent, and was ultimately committed to a state hospital, where he was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic. During his second hospitalization, when he was twenty-one, Roe's father successfully petitioned to be the guardian of his incompetent son so that he could care for him when he returned home. Upon that return, Roe refused to take the medication prescribed by his psychiatrists; his parents, fearful of his return to a psychotic, assaultive state, sought to compel him to do so. When a legal-aid lawyer who had known Roe at the hospital became involved, the stage was set for another landmark decision on autonomy.

In response to the efforts of Roe's parents to get him to take the medication that would normalize his behavior, the Massachusetts court created an elaborate judicial procedure intended to divine whether Roe would have refused the medication had he been competent to choose. His admittedly incompetent refusal of treatment, the court ruled, was to be taken into account as evidence of what he might have desired if competent. Reaching this

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result, the court quickly disposed of the parents' claim that they had the right to decide this issue for their son by noting its "preference for judicial resolution of certain legal issues arising from proposed extraordinary medical treatment." It made no difference that the medication in question was, in fact, a well-established and routine treatment for schizophrenia. Nor did the court think it conclusive that the medication was indisputably the best (and probably the only) way to restore Roe to competence so that he could exercise his own autonomy. In the name of autonomy, a procedure was created that favored the maintenance of Roe's psychotic, non-autonomous state.

Had the court recognized the importance of restoring health and competence, and respecting the values of family life, it might have decided differently. Rather than again inquiring into what an incompetent's decision would have been if he had been competent—a quixotic quest—the court might have acknowledged frankly that health should at times take precedence over pretensions to autonomy. Further, instead of dismissing as suspect the family's interest in seeing their son treated—the court believed that the tranquility of the family home and the development of Roe's siblings might have been foremost in their minds (are these things so easily separable from Richard Roe's interests?)—the court could have recognized that Roe's parents, who wanted to care for their son despite his severe illness, were the best people to determine his needs. In short, a presumption for treatment and for health could have been established.

No matter how the courts behave, though, physicians also have a significant stake in seeing that their traditional emphasis on healing is not replaced by a morally suspect variety of triage. Indeed, at a time when doctors are facing great uncertainty generally, because of the basic economic restructuring taking place in medicine, they would do well to reaffirm a professional ethic that rests on a responsibility to treat. In a world of high finance and rapid corporatization, doctors are likely to become increasingly dissatisfied as they search for new opportunities in an economic climate that breeds both winners and losers. In such circumstances, if comfort is to be found, it will come from the non-economic rewards of patient trust, respect, and confidence. To earn those, however, will require an undivided commitment to healing the sick and preserving life.

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Ethiopia: The Communist Uses of Famine

Arch Puddington

TOWARD the end of 1984, at the height of a famine which has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of its citizens, the Ethiopian government launched one of the most far-reaching social experiments of recent memory. The plan, as explained by government officials, was to relocate between 1.5 and 2 million peasants from the country's mountainous and relatively arid northern provinces to what were officially described as "uninhabited virgin areas" in the nation's central and southern regions.

Government spokesmen justified the resettlement project on both humanitarian and economic grounds. The northern provinces, it was pointed out, were the most severely afflicted by drought and famine, to the point where the very survival of the peasantry depended on a thinning-out of the population. Furthermore, it was claimed that resettlement was essential if Ethiopia were ever to develop a viable, self-sufficient rural economy. Without a population redeployment, officials warned, Ethiopia would forever remain a ward of international charity.

This latter point was reiterated forcefully, even angrily, whenever Western governments expressed doubts about the wisdom of uprooting and shifting masses of people around the country in the midst of a catastrophic famine. Western misgivings were unwarranted, officials insisted; instead of carping about resettlement, the wealthier capitalist nations should be promoting it by contributing generous sums of development aid specifically for this project. Nevertheless, to assuage the apprehensions of foreign governments and relief agencies, Ethiopian spokesmen stressed that candidates for resettlement would be chosen on a strictly voluntary basis, that the program would be carried out in an orderly and humane fashion, and that each resettled family would receive a private plot of two hectares and "cattle, seed, fertilizer, and medical assistance for at least one year."

These reassurances did not dispel the worries of foreign governments, which were donating millions of dollars in famine relief, or of the multitude of relief organizations which raised money and helped administer the distribution of food and other humanitarian goods. The relief agencies in particular were by then well-acquainted with the Ethiopian regime's callous disregard for the well-being of the rural populace, as demonstrated by the diversion to the military of foreign-donated food designated for famine victims and the ruthless methods used to prevent food from reaching provinces where insurgent movements were challenging the authority of the central government. Despite all this, objections to resettlement initially were either suppressed or couched in the mildest possible terms. Specialists in international development were even quick to point out that, in theory, resettlement might contribute to the recovery of Ethiopia's farm economy.

However, no one outside the Communist world believed that resettlement should be the centerpiece of agricultural policy, or that it should be undertaken on a mass scale during a time of severe famine. And in the most revealing reflection of the prevailing Western attitude, governments and relief agencies almost without exception refrained from financing or participating in resettlement, including those which in the past had supported collectivist farm schemes in other Third World nations.

In fact, cynical observers theorized in private that resettlement was being put forward not because of official overzealousness or panic, but as part of a deliberate strategy having nothing to do with feeding the hungry. Rather, they noted that the "overpopulated" areas which were to supply candidates for resettlement just happened to be the very regions where opposition movements were in open rebellion. In this view, resettlement provided a convenient smokescreen for the depopulation of troublesome regions, a classic counter-insurgency technique. Some theorized as well that resettlement was meant to advance another long-standing goal: agricultural collectivization. Ethiopian officials repeatedly denied any intention of using force to increase the percentage of farmland organized along socialist lines. But as a foreign diplomat predicted: "Certainly in a year or so we're likely to be informed that the people have unanimously expressed their desire to be collectivized."

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The resettlement program is now slightly more than one year old, and despite extraordinary measures taken by the authorities to stop embarrassing information from reaching the outside, we have come to learn a great deal about the consequences of the project. The evidence suggests something far more serious than imagined by the most skeptical observers. Among the conclusions: resettlement was never conceived of as a voluntary enterprise, and the overwhelming majority of resettlement families were compelled to participate; thousands upon thousands died in holding camps, en route to their new homes, or after having arrived at the resettlement sites; many of the resettlement sites were not uninhabited, as the government had asserted, and families already living there were uprooted without compensation; resettlement sites more nearly resembled penal labor camps than the private farming plots advertised by the government; family separations were a frequent occurrence during the resettlement process; resettlement has been exploited to further the creation of the most radical form of collective-farm enterprise; Western assistance intended to feed the hungry has been routinely redirected to the resettlement program.

Moreover, a compelling body of evidence strongly suggests that Ethiopian government policies played a much more substantial role in exacerbating the effects of famine than was previously recognized. This is not to say that responsibility for the famine rests entirely on the shoulders of the country's political leaders. But the Ethiopian case differs in a number of crucial respects from other famine-ravaged African nations like Mali, Niger, and Sudan. Ethiopia has suffered not so much a natural catastrophe as a deliberate state-sponsored atrocity, with nature providing the authorities with the means to break the rural society's resistance to radical change. Thus the parallels which can be applied to Ethiopia are less with Africa than with previous instances of totalitarian agrarian extremism: the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia; China during the Great Leap Forward; the Ukrainian famine of the early 1930's.

THERE is one important difference between developments in Ethiopia and previous cases where Communist policies, purposely or otherwise, led to the starvation of millions of peasants. The previous instances—especially in the Ukraine and China—took place under ideal totalitarian conditions, with the borders of the affected areas sealed off from foreign journalists, relief workers, and diplomats. Even today scholars continue to debate how many people died in the Ukrainian famine, a controversy which may never be satisfactorily resolved due to the sketchiness of Soviet demographic data. And even less is known about conditions in rural China during the early 1960's. Ethiopia, by contrast, was reluctantly forced to give the outside world a glimpse of internal conditions once it decided to apply for international relief.

That the regime was sensitive to the implications of seeking aid outside the Soviet bloc was made clear by its having waited until late 1984 to initiate an appeal for help, a date well after famine had begun to claim Ethiopian lives. The date is significant, for in September 1984 the regime played host to a mammoth celebration, complete with processions orchestrated by North Korean advisers, to mark the tenth anniversary of the revolution that brought the Communist regime to power in Ethiopia. Only after this extravagant event, costing upward of $100 million, did the regime see fit to inform the world that millions of its people were starving to death; within Ethiopia itself the famine was seldom referred to in the state-controlled media. Many residents of Addis Ababa, the capital city, learned the true dimensions of the famine only in conversation with foreigners.

To minimize the likelihood of unpleasant publicity, the authorities have limited foreigners' access to the countryside. No foreigners are permitted to enter the areas where candidates for resettlement are rounded up or to visit the holding camps where peasants are kept while awaiting transportation to their new homes. Nor are foreigners permitted to inspect the resettlement sites, the only exceptions being carefully-screened delegations which are shown the same few Potemkin Village-style model settlements. Of necessity, some relief workers are allowed to visit various parts of the countryside to distribute food and other aid; they hear stories about atrocities, and occasionally witness them. Generally, however, relief organizations are reluctant to protest government actions out of a justifiable fear that their projects will be closed down. This fear was confirmed this past December, when a French organization, Doctors Without Borders (*Médecins sans Frontières*), was expelled after publicly criticizing the resettlement program.*

Nevertheless, relief workers have privately given Western journalists important information. Moreover, because of government-imposed constraints, some of the most illuminating research has been conducted outside Ethiopia, primarily in Sudan, where nearly one million Ethiopian peasants fled to escape drought, war, and resettlement. Interviews with these refugees provide the basis for the most comprehensive—and disturbing—study of the resettlement program, which was compiled by Cultural Survival, an organization of American anthropologists primarily concerned with the plight of oppressed indigenous minority groups.†

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* See *Mass Deportation in Ethiopia*, a report issued by Doctors Without Borders and written by the organization's executive director, Dr. Claude Malhuret.

† *Politics and Famine in Ethiopia*, by Jason W. Clay and Bonnie K. Holcomb, Occasional Paper #20, Cultural Survival, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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PERHAPS the most important question raised by the Cultural Survival study is the degree of government responsibility for the famine. This issue, in turn, leads directly to the question of whether resettlement is essential to the recovery of the country's rural economy. As noted earlier, many development authorities were of the opinion that a population redistribution would alleviate Ethiopia's chronic food shortages. According to this view, the northern provinces, from which candidates for resettlement were to be selected, suffered from a complex syndrome of problems, including ruinous farming practices and overpopulation, as well as periodic drought.

There is, no doubt, considerable merit to these analyses; but the question remains whether the purely agricultural—as opposed to the political—problems of the region justify so complete and radical a solution as mass internal deportation. On this question, the testimony of Ethiopian peasants is quite revealing. Many, for example, report being scheduled for resettlement despite having an average harvest the previous year. Thus their designation for resettlement is understandable only within the context of the regime's military priorities.

Or again: because the most drought-ridden areas of Tigre province were situated in territory controlled by the Tigre Popular Liberation Front, the regime apparently decided to find candidates for resettlement exclusively in areas under secure government domination. Nor was there any rational basis for the selection of families for resettlement; indeed, it is inaccurate to speak of a selection process. As we shall see, peasants in a particular area would simply be seized en masse by soldiers and packed off to a holding camp. In some instances, peasants taken away from their farms left behind crops ready for harvest.

A government capable of deporting successful peasants in the midst of famine is capable of a great deal. Thus, in Ethiopia, the government played a direct role in the killing of hundreds of thousands of people through a series of actions purposely designed to create havoc in the countryside. One of the most sinister policies was the campaign against the "hoarding" of grain. Initially the drive against hoarding was limited to exhortations against the stockpiling of grain and mutterings about "kulaks," who allegedly had enriched themselves as a result of the post-revolutionary land-reform program. However, in the period leading up to the famine, soldiers conducted thorough sweeps of peasant areas, confiscating surplus grain at gunpoint, a policy justified in the name of socialist egalitarianism. Yet peasants from the Wollo region, for example, cited the stockpiling of grain as having enabled them to survive frequent periods of famine; it was only after the Marxist rulers had decreed hoarding to be a criminal act, and then moved forthrightly to enforce the new revolutionary standard, that these peasants faced the prospect of starvation.

In the northern provinces, an additional problem was the fact that land reform led to reduced acreages for many individual peasants, with the surplus land transferred to collective farms administered by the peasant associations, one of the many mass organizations established after the revolution. The result of all this was a sudden decrease in peasant productivity. As one refugee explained: "There are farmers in our area who can produce in one harvest enough food for seven years. But no more. This is not because the land has changed but because the government takes it all."

Another problem was a requirement that peasants work long hours for state farms run by the peasant associations or the military. In addition, peasants were expected to attend political lectures and literacy classes, meetings which were usually devoted to official explanations of why, in one peasant's words, "they are taking our grain, our money, our people." The result of the myriad meetings, classes, assemblies, rallies, and work details—all obligatory and without compensation —was to leave the peasant with practically no time to devote to farming his own fields.

All this helps explain one of Cultural Survival's most startling findings: that many peasants believed the famine was *entirely* the product of political decisions. Not one refugee interviewed in the Yabuus (Sudan) relief camp cited drought as a major or even subsidiary cause of famine in the region of Ethiopia which they had fled. Rather, the two most frequently noted reasons were the 4-5 days per week of compulsory work on collective farms and a category labeled simply "imprisonment prevents farm work," which says a great deal about the state's priorities. Despite a desperate need for increased food production, peasants were jailed on such charges as failure to pay taxes, resisting the confiscation of land, trading outside government channels, refusing to arrest a neighbor as part of militia duty, working the fields during a political seminar or literacy class (frequently mentioned by refugees), suspicion of assisting the Oromo Liberation Front, and publicly objecting to government decisions.

Still another problem was the confiscation of guns. The major result of this policy was to give free rein to foraging animals, such as baboons, who were capable of destroying an entire year's harvest unless killed or driven away. In disarming the peasantry, the authorities were clearly acting to undermine prospective insurgencies. Yet at the same time the government was aware of and unconcerned by the implications for agricultural production. The fact that individual peasants were forbidden to kill wild animals while crops in collective farms were carefully protected indicates that the confiscation of guns was yet another

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element in a broad strategy to eliminate the private farmer from the Ethiopian economy.

In short, the state helped create the conditions it now cites as justification for a radical and inhumane reorganization of rural life: resettlement.

IN DESIGNATING peasants for resettlement, the regime gave wide authority to the various totalitarian structures which had already played so central a part in subverting the position of the private farmer. Local peasant associations were assigned a resettlement quota, to be filled by whatever measures were necessary. Compulsion of one form or another was almost always required, since few peasants would readily agree to enlist in so dubious an enterprise. An often-employed tactic was the promise of food, as in the following example, from Welo Province:

> Board chairmen or members of the peasants' association announced that the government was going to distribute food aid in the nearest market town. . . . The advice to go to the nearest market town was followed without distrust. "The old and the sick came, children and youths and famine victims," says Ahmed Mohamed. "Some very old people were even brought on camels. I carried my sick wife into town on a stretcher with the help of a neighbor. We were all full of expectations." But at the assembly centers the peasants were rounded up by soldiers and militia men. . . . During these operations anyone in town looking like a peasant was captured and also resettled: the Koran student who was in the marketplace, a young man who wanted to visit his mother, peasants selling grain, young men selling wood in the town.

A similar ploy required all peasants in a particular area to bring their oxen to the village for vaccination, where the peasants were seized and processed for deportation.

On other occasions, troops were sent into an area to conduct dragnets for resettlement candidates. Peter Niggli, a Swiss relief official who talked to Ethiopian refugees in Sudan, described how these sweeps were carried out:

> The resettlement takes place without prior warning: villages in the vicinity of the garrisons are enclosed by military troops or militias at night or in the early morning hours, and all inhabitants the troops can get hold of are rounded up. The people are told the lie that they will be brought to a political assembly in the nearest town. . . . The troops caught the candidates for resettlement asleep, in sick-bed, while harvesting, ploughing, threshing, while herding cattle, repairing a fence . . . or simply arrested them in the streets if they happened to pass through a village that was to be resettled.

Nor was the regime above exploiting the presence of foreign relief workers. Thus Tigrean peasants were enticed to a feeding center where Red Cross representatives were supposed to distribute aid; instead, the relief workers were told to stay in their quarters while soldiers took the peasants off to resettlement holding sites. Relief workers also reported instances of soldiers conducting sweeps for resettlement victims in relief camps during the dead of night, and of a policy by some camp administrators to issue food rations only to those famine victims who agreed to participate in the relocation program.

As should be evident by now, the government paid little attention to humanitarian niceties in its headlong rush to move as many people as possible in the shortest possible time. Since many resettled peasants were grabbed while working in the fields or traveling about their districts, a not surprising side-effect was a high incidence of family separation. Although, of course, precise figures are not available, a comment by a peasant who fled the resettlement program hints at the dimensions of the problem:

> Everything occurs, but not a complete family: men without their family (the majority of cases), men with one child, women with some of their children but never with all of them, children or youths without a family but with one brother and men with relatives but without wives and children. . . . And it makes no difference whether someone was ill or not, or whether a woman was pregnant or not.

Once a peasant had been taken away by the military, he was confined to one of the holding camps. These often were nothing more than jails, where the peasant shared quarters with common criminals. Despite the high priority given resettlement by the government, and the generous transport assistance provided by the Soviet Union and other Communist-bloc countries, peasants often had to remain in the holding camps for weeks while arrangements were completed. Starvation rations were the norm, and it was not uncommon for peasants to go without food or drink for several days. Mortality rates were extremely high, to the point where concern was expressed by relief officials from the United Nations (no small matter, since the UN, practically alone among outside agencies working in Ethiopia, consistently supported resettlement and downplayed or explained away the "mistakes" committed by the government). Similarly horrible conditions due to overcrowding obtained during transit from the holding camps to the resettlement sites.

Then there were the resettlement sites themselves. As already noted, the government had made a number of promises: each settler would have a decent-sized plot; farm implements and oxen were to be made available; there were to be separate houses for each family, with running water and metal roofs, and schools and medical facilities were pledged for each settlement area. Peasants were even shown a film, supposedly of the resettlement area, depicting mile upon mile of grain waiting to be harvested.

The reality was altogether different. Peasants

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arriving in the Asosa region found a wild and uncultivated tangle of weeds and grasses. As one stunned peasant later described the landscape of Asosa: "Around us grew grass and bamboo as tall as men. I felt like garbage that had been dropped in the middle of nowhere." There was no housing for most of those assigned to Asosa, and thus the first order of business was building houses for the political cadres, the militia, and only then the settlers themselves. Peasants were not permitted to build individual homes; they were housed in barracks-like units holding 200-300 persons each.

Conditions were similar to the accounts—all too familiar by now—of Stalin's slave-labor camps, or, more recently, Vietnam's New Economic Zones. The peasants worked long hours at hard physical work. Their only compensation was a meager food ration. Sometimes they would be told to work at nearby state farms, again without pay. The workers were kept under constant armed guard to prevent escapes and keep shirking to a minimum. The death rate at the resettlement camps was extremely high; it is conservatively estimated that death claimed between 50,000 and 100,000 of the 400,000 peasants resettled in the program's first eight months.

Nor, as it turned out, were all the resettlement areas uninhabited. Some had been successfully farmed for years, and as was the case for those coerced into relocating, the program proved a curse for the original residents. Their lands were expropriated by the state, which then amalgamated adjoining plots to form state entities. Those displaced faced the unpleasant alternative of moving in with relatives or joining a state farm, where working conditions were decidedly inferior to conditions they were used to as private farmers.

One might well wonder why the government would uproot one group of peasants and replace it with another group of uprooted peasants. In fact, this policy does not reflect mismanagement or administrative confusion but rather a deliberate move to advance two government objectives. First, the regime has attempted so thoroughly to disrupt the traditional social and economic patterns of the countryside that the peasants will gladly accept the relative security of collectivized agriculture. As Stalin demonstrated in an earlier time, even the most obstinate peasant will capitulate if he is squeezed and battered with sufficient resolve.

A second reason, which again borrows from the Stalinist arsenal, is related to Ethiopia's persistent nationalities problems. Traditionally, Ethiopia has been under the domination of one group, the Amharas, and resentment over the subordinate position of other nationality groups predates the 1974 revolution. But anti-Amhara sentiments which simmered under Emperor Haile Selassie literally exploded after the new leadership of radical military men launched a drive to remake Ethiopian society, and secessionist movements have emerged in at least four regions of the country. Although the authorities betray a preference for brute force in dealing with national insurgencies, a long-term strategy aimed at the dilution of nationality cohesiveness is also being implemented. Right now, resettlement is a principal instrument of Ethiopia's nationality policy, as thousands of Tigreans have been removed from ancestral lands and settled among Oromos and other groups. There are already reports of resettled Tigreans being armed and sent into battle against Oromo secessionists, a development which, the regime hopes, will deflect Oromo resentment from the central authorities to their new Tigrean neighbors.

In addition to resettlement, Ethiopia has implemented another policy which should, over the next decade, significantly move the countryside toward full collectivization. Known as the "villageization" campaign, this project will eventually affect 33 million peasants, or the overwhelming majority of the rural populace. Villageization entails the abandonment of the scattered settlements which currently predominate in the countryside and the creation of villages where all peasants in a particular area will be obliged to reside. The actual moving of homes and belongings is the responsibility of the peasant himself; during the past year, over one million peasants have completed the process. Leaving aside the question of whether villageization will strengthen Ethiopian agriculture over the long run, one is struck by the awesome irresponsibility of instituting so disruptive a program during a time of famine when the overriding need is to ensure a successful harvest.

Here it must be emphasized that what to outsiders may seem mistaken and even inhumane priorities carry a clear logic when the government's long-range plans are taken into consideration. Ethiopia's leaders have declared, again and again and again, that they intend to transform their society along socialist lines. And by socialist they do not mean some watered-down variant of "African socialism" as practiced in Tanzania and Zambia. To be sure, other African states have expropriated the socialist label, and some claim the heritage of Lenin as well as Marx. But while the policies of such countries as Angola and Mozambique have been guided by a totalitarian inspiration, only in Ethiopia has the leadership set in motion a thoroughgoing and irreversible reorganization of society. Despite famine or other external complications, in Ethiopia the march toward socialism proceeds undeterred.

In an overwhelmingly peasant society, full socialism, in the words of two leftist authorities on Ethiopia, requires "expanding the state's control over the economy and in particular a substantial transformation of agrarian relations."* Ethiopia's

* Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution* (London, Verso, 1981).

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tyrannical leader, Mengistu Haile Mariam, has put the matter bluntly: "The question of whether or not to socialize the rural production relations is really a question of whether or not to build socialism."

Yet until the most recent famine, the Dergue, or military committee, which assumed leadership after the revolution, had proceeded with uncustomary caution in its agrarian policies. Even so, the initial land-reform decree gave hints of things to come. Although its major purpose was to break the landholding domination of the nobility and the Coptic church, land reform imposed a ten-hectare limitation on peasant holdings and forbade the hiring of agricultural labor. More to the point, peasants were not given title to redistributed land but rather were given permission only to use the land.

Another ominous sign was the anti-private-peasant rhetoric employed by Mengistu, who complained about lazy and unproductive peasants and denounced "kulaks" for resisting collectivization, hoarding grain, and taking over the leadership of some peasant associations.

Mengistu's analysis was not entirely incorrect. After a surge triggered by the initial land reform, farm production entered a steady decline in response to the policies set down in Addis Ababa. Peasants saw no reason to sell their grain at the artificially low prices decreed by the state, especially since there was little to purchase because of general economic deterioration. And although a collectivization program, organized with the assistance of East German advisers, was launched in 1980, by 1984 state farms accounted for a mere 8 percent of farm production. While state farms continue to receive the overwhelming share of state agricultural investment funds, they have never turned a profit, and thus serve as yet another drag on the Ethiopian economy.

Had it not been for the famine, it is likely that the collectivization drive would have continued at its initial modest pace, particularly since the government, already bogged down by insurgent combat, was unlikely to risk driving Oromo or Tigrean peasants further into opposition. Then famine created unforeseen opportunities for rearranging the rural economy. A starving peasantry would be less prone to fight the drastic measures —like resettlement—which invariably accompany collectivization. Likewise, the international community would be more likely to ignore or excuse acts of repression that in ordinary times might incite charges of human-rights violations. Finally, famine opened the possibility of acquiring assistance from conscience-stricken foreigners which could be used to advance collectivization. As matters have turned out, foreign sources have generally refused to give money for resettlement or collectivization. Yet the regime has been able to divert humanitarian aid for the resettlement campaign by, for example, using foreign-donated trucks for the transportation of peasants to resettlement sites.

IRONICALLY, it was a previous famine, in 1973, which contributed to Haile Selassie's downfall. But even today it remains unclear why what began as an almost bloodless coup degenerated into a brutal Communist dictatorship. Although there was a degree of pro-Communist sentiment among the pre-revolutionary student class, there were no underground parties of any consequence. And while the Soviets had long coveted Ethiopia's strategic position on the Horn of Africa, no evidence has been uncovered to indicate Kremlin complicity in the coup which toppled Haile Selassie. One can, of course, explain the Dergue's march into the Soviet camp as stemming from its desperate need for military assistance to put down the various secessionist threats. Yet this is unconvincing; after all, the United States had provided generous amounts of military aid to the Emperor, and would have continued to give aid to a pro-Western government (although the U.S. would not have sent in troops, as the Soviets did in the form of Cuban proxies during the Ogaden crisis in 1977-78). In any event, it was the Dergue's extremist and intrusive policies which set off the wave of secessionist movements; whatever his shortcomings, Haile Selassie was much shrewder—and far less murderous—in his dealings with the country's various nationality groups than the revolutionary leadership has been.

Nor can it be reasonably claimed that a hostile United States "pushed" Ethiopia into the arms of the Soviets. Successive American administrations have, if anything, been excessively tolerant of Ethiopia's military leaders, given their increasingly pro-Soviet stance and wretched human-rights record. Even after America had been denounced and humiliated, the opinion still prevailed that the Dergue would eventually turn toward the U.S. in order to extricate itself from the wreckage of irrational economic policies. Instead, in response to the famine, Mengistu has demanded—and received—American humanitarian assistance while at the same time moving ever closer to the Soviets.

A more plausible explanation of the course the Ethiopian revolution has taken is that the Dergue initially saw Marxism as a legitimizing instrument, a rationale for the continued dominance of a group of inexperienced soldiers. But if at first the Dergue's revolutionary credentials were somewhat contrived, the leadership has since come to embrace Communism as a matter of conviction. Communism appeals to the Dergue for the same reason it has appealed to the radicalized elites of other Third World countries: it seems to be a means of transforming a backward society while bypassing the normal stages of development. And insofar as it holds forth the promise of total state power, Communism is doubly appealing to a man like Mengistu, who sees himself as an African

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Castro and compares Ethiopia's role in Africa with Vietnam's in Asia.

Mengistu's revolutionary scenario calls for nothing less than a telescoping of the European revolutions of 1789, 1848, and 1917 and a transformation of his country from absolute monarchy to full Communism over a period of several decades. In putting forth this mad agenda, Mengistu has until now avoided the kind of forthright opprobrium that the West has reserved for South African apartheid or even the Philippines under Marcos. Mengistu even has his Western admirers, such as the British observer who placed the Dergue's reign of terror in a broad historical perspective: "Ethiopia is compressing the history of Britain from the Norman conquest to the Industrial Revolution into one generation. . . . In that context, the number of deaths is minuscule."

Well before embarking on his campaign to bring socialism to the countryside, Mengistu succeeded in placing urban society under firm state dominion. Most industries, banks, and businesses have been nationalized, as has urban land. As the urban economy has deteriorated, these measures have been strengthened. Strict limits have been imposed on the amount of housing space permitted urban dwellers; those who exceed the limit must relocate, pay additional taxes, or take in tenants. The state has also decreed limits on the size of private businesses; those exceeding the limits are liable to nationalization. At a time when a number of Communist regimes are encouraging a modest level of private initiative, Mengistu is moving in a direction guaranteed to damage further an already sagging economy.

To enforce its rule in the cities, the Dergue early on set up urban *kebeles*, a Communist version of the neighborhood association, but with far more expansive authority than similar organizations in the non-Communist world. The *kebeles* were given the power to determine who qualified to live in a particular residence, as well as wide patronage power over jobs, rationed food, and travel permits (necessary for long-distance travel within Ethiopia). The *kebeles* conducted literacy classes and seminars on Marxism, and *kebele* cadres kept a close watch over the comings and goings in the neighborhood.

In addition to the *kebeles*, the government imposed strict urban residency restrictions; impoverished peasants who attempted to live in the cities without official permission were seized by authorities and dumped outside the city limits. These measures, combined with a general police-state atmosphere, explain why visitors have so often remarked on the absence of abject poverty in Addis Ababa.

The *kebeles* became especially important during the so-called "Red Terror," in 1977-78, when thousands were killed in the capital city. *Kebele* paramilitary units carried out door-to-door searches for suspected members of underground opposition groups, mostly high-school and university students (who admittedly employed violent tactics in their own right). Often those killed would simply be left on the streets, bedecked with placards inscribed with revolutionary slogans, as a warning to other potential "class enemies." Others were piled in a heap at the morgue, where bodies could be claimed only after payment of a stiff fee by friends or family.

Mengistu did not find these practices embarrassing. Quite the contrary. In a 1977 May Day speech, he declared: "The recent role played by workers, peasants, and progressive men in uniform in weeding out anarchists and infiltrators has proven the Marxist-Leninist theory that the working class is the most revolutionary of all classes."

Lower-level officials were even more candid in their celebration of violence. The execution of a high official was described as "the revolutionary process manifesting itself at the highest level." An official of one of the many mass organizations declared: "What one observes in this country today is open class struggle—in other words, violence is primary." Or as another official elaborated: "One might look at the whole thing from a moral point of view—why kill people? . . . But the question of violence cannot be approached from a purely abstract moral level." Although they admitted the possibility of mistakes, these were "insignificant compared to the successes." These young revolutionary enthusiasts, who gloried only yesterday in the purifying effects of violence, are today prosecuting a collectivization campaign whose mortality rate vastly exceeds the numbers deliberately murdered during the struggle against the urban opposition.

While Mengistu's Red Terror succeeded admirably in demoralizing the urban populace, it failed to win popular loyalty. With the exception of those directly connected to the Workers party of Ethiopia, there exists no mass constituency for Communism, the Dergue, or even Mengistu as a national leader. The Russians are universally despised, and Western culture and Americans remain highly popular. While the unpopularity of the regime's policies has not deterred it from pressing ahead on both the domestic and international fronts, it has caused Mengistu to refocus the drive to "reeducate" the Ethiopian people. Borrowing a page from the experience of other Communist societies, the Dergue has placed its hopes and energies on instilling in the younger generation socialist values and a hatred for all things American.

One of the most important components of the Dergue's educational plans is the establishment of a series of orphanages where the political cadres of the future are being carefully indoctrinated. The orphanages were putatively designed for children of parents killed during the various wars which followed in the revolution's wake.

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Many of the students, however, are not orphans, but children separated from their parents during the resettlement campaign.

According to Blaine Harden, a reporter for the Washington *Post*, the showcase orphanage is called the Revolutionary Ethiopian Children's Village. A banner at the entrance carries the slogan: "We growing children are determined to follow the method of our father, Comrade Chairman Mengistu Haile Mariam." Mengistu's image appears on practically every wall, as do Marxist sayings such as "We shall combat all anti-socialist tendencies."

From interviews with the children, it can be gathered that the regime may eventually reap political dividends from its new strategy. One student dutifully described President Reagan as an "oppressor." Asked about foreign relief efforts, another student responded: "The Soviet Union and the East Germans give food. And African countries give medicine. No other countries give help." The same student reported having heard that Ethiopia had fought a war with the United States, and that Ethiopia had won. And when asked about the general state of affairs in her country, she answered that conditions had improved dramatically since the revolution: "Before, we did not have enough ammunition. Now we have enough to fight our enemies. We don't have to beg."

We of course cannot know for certain if the children interviewed by Harden—with their distorted view of history and militaristic attitude—are representative of those raised in the special orphanages. We do know that the Ethiopian government is sufficiently satisfied with the results to have announced ambitious plans for the establishment of a number of additional institutions. Although the regime's plans cannot be realized without foreign assistance, the possibility cannot be discounted that democratic governments will end up contributing to the rawest kind of militaristic and anti-democratic indoctrination. As Harden notes, the Revolutionary Ethiopian Children's Village was financed by a $13 million grant from Sweden and an additional $1 million from UNICEF.*

It remains to be seen whether Mengistu can create a mass base of support for Communism. If he should fail, as seems likely, it would not be the first time that a Communist regime has survived though despised by the people over whom it rules. Yet even by the normally low Communist standards of political legitimacy, the Ethiopian case is unique. In practically every other Communist nation, at least some segment of the population—sections of the working class, the intelligentsia, even the peasantry—has been initially favorably disposed toward radical change. Moreover, most Communist regimes, having gained power, are at first able to enhance their popularity through policies of redistribution or patronage; it is only later, when mass repression and confiscatory policies like collectivization are introduced, that the true nature of the system is revealed. By contrast, the Ethiopian revolution materialized out of violence and has been sustained solely by the leadership's willingness to annihilate anyone seen as an obstacle.

To fulfill Mengistu's dream of transforming Ethiopia into the first truly Communist state on the African continent will require the assistance of the capitalist world. The Soviets have made it clear that they have no intention of permanently subsidizing another developing country; one Cuba is all they will support. Based on past experience, Mengistu no doubt concludes that the West will eventually set aside its objections to his domestic regime, and provide the means to build Communism, whether out of humanitarian concern or because of the lingering hope that Ethiopia can be persuaded to modify its global alignment. Already there are signs that some Western governments, Italy and Canada in particular, have begun to donate a modest supply of aid for the resettlement program.

Rather than caving in to Mengistu's unyielding demands, however, the democracies could actively resist resettlement with the most effective means available. Unless concessions were offered by the Dergue, an unlikely prospect, the United States might impose a moratorium on all aid to Ethiopia, and exert pressure on foreign governments and private relief organizations to do likewise. The inevitable arguments would be raised; resettlement is a *fait accompli*, and cutting off aid would only punish the Ethiopian people for the crimes of their rulers. But at the present time the evidence suggests that resettlement itself may be responsible for more deaths than famine, which has abated with improved rainfall. Doctors Without Borders has proposed a total moratorium on assistance to Ethiopia by governments and private relief organizations for a three-month period, during which an international commission could conduct an on-site investigation of the resettlement program. The commission would issue recommendations regarding a more humane implementation of the program, and address the broader question of whether resettlement is necessary as a means of breaking the famine cycle. A decision to lift the moratorium could then be based on the commission's find-

* Communist authorities in Afghanistan, similarly encountering difficulties in convincing the people to embrace Communism, have also established a group of orphanages for the education and training of future political cadres. The institutions are run by the Afghan secret police. In both the Afghan and Ethiopian cases, the inspiration is Soviet. Under the Bolsheviks, the secret police (Cheka) played an important part in raising children orphaned by the revolution and civil war. Feliks Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Cheka, observed that "the care of children is the best means of destroying counterrevolution."

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ings and the Ethiopian government's willingness to make the recommended changes.

Beyond the question of whether to maintain humanitarian aid, there must be a recognition that Ethiopia is not a Chile or even a South Africa, with a little extra killing thrown in. The Dergue's rule combines the most lethal aspects of Communism, militarism, and Third World brutalism; among postwar regimes, only the Khmer Rouge has exceeded the Ethiopians in savagery.

Ethiopia also reminds us of how politically alike are geographically and culturally disparate Third World Communist regimes. Mengistu's methods are certainly more deadly than, to take another timely example, those of the Sandinistas, but the similarities are all too apparent: the disdain for the rights of national minorities; the determination to collectivize agriculture against all common sense; the neighborhood spy committees; political indoctrination camouflaged as a literacy drive; the rewriting of history; even resettlement (which the Nicaraguans have instituted in provinces where pro-*contra* sentiment runs high).

A major difference is that the Nicaraguan revolution has been subjected to a microscopic examination by experts, journalists, and diplomats from around the world, while Ethiopia has been largely ignored. There is also the reality of American pressure, until now the principal obstacle to the consolidation of totalitarian rule in Nicaragua.

Unluckily for the Ethiopian people, the predominant superpower in their region has not only failed to restrain the excesses of Ethiopia's political leaders; the Soviet Union, calling on years of experience in its own land and elsewhere, has played a crucial part in conceiving and executing a plan which has turned Ethiopia into yet another Gulag state.

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A Russian Writer's Jewish Fate

Simon Markish

WITH the U.S. publication of *Life and Fate*,* his masterwork, the name of the Russian writer Vasily Grossman (1905-64) will, one hopes, become more familiar to the American reader than has hitherto been the case. Until World War II, even specialists were unaware of his work, though he had been publishing since the 30's. During the war years his reportage and sketches from the front made him famous in the Soviet Union, where he was ranked right below Ilya Ehrenburg as a journalist, but knowledge of him seems never to have reached the West. On two occasions in the last years of Stalin's reign he fell under the crushing wheels of the ideological machine, but at that time there were more famous victims and martyrs—Anna Akhmatova, for example—and again, so far as the West was concerned, Grossman remained in the shadows.

In 1970, six years after his death, Grossman's short novel *Forever Flowing*, which had not been published in the Soviet Union but which had been spirited out in manuscript, appeared with an émigré press. The story concerns a man who has lived through Stalin's camps and returns after thirty years to try to comprehend everything that has occurred, to understand the roots and nature of the Soviet system and the frailty and the strength of human beings. The book was noticed, and was translated into seven languages, including English (Harper & Row, 1972). In a review in the New York *Times*, Thomas Lask compared Grossman with Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn. Still, the book made neither political nor literary waves and was soon forgotten.†

In 1975, three different émigré journals printed excerpts from an unpublished novel by Vasily Grossman. As with *Forever Flowing*, this text had also left its fatherland in secret. This time, however, Russian publishers in the West were in no rush to bring out the complete version—possibly because of its size, around a thousand typed pages, but more likely because of ideological considerations. To some people Grossman seemed insufficiently anti-Soviet, to others, unforgivably anti-Russian; I will return to this later on. In any event, the novel, *Life and Fate*, was eventually published in Lausanne, in the original in 1980, and in 1983 in French translation.

If the Russian edition made little stir in the émigré press—little as compared with almost anything written by the big guns of the Russian emigration, Solzhenitsyn and Vladimir Maximov—the French edition became a literary sensation. With the exception of the Communist daily *L'Humanité*, every newspaper of any importance in France, Belgium, and French Switzerland spoke of the book and its author in tones that were not just complimentary but ecstatic: ". . . An encyclopedia of Soviet life"; ". . . a Soviet Tolstoy"; ". . . he will enter the pantheon of Russian literature"; "a historical fresco, a gigantic work, the great Russian novel of the 20th century"; "since the time of Chekhov and Tolstoy there has been nothing so stirring, so staggering." There were dozens of reviews like these. And the novel was not only a critical success but also a genuine commercial one: it made the best-seller list and sold more than 150,000 copies, which for an 800-page translation priced at 150 francs is no small feat, at least in European terms. In 1984 the novel came out in Italian and German (among the many German reviews was an enormously long one by Heinrich Böll in *Die Zeit*), and now, at last, in England and the United States.

Why, ten years ago, was the West indifferent to Grossman's voice, and why is it now so enamored? It seems to me that the explanation lies, on the one hand, in an accidental chain of circumstances favorable to the novel and, on the other hand, in a profound and important lesson that cannot help being recognized, however dimly, by every reader. To the category of chance we must relegate the unusual fate of the novel in the Soviet Union, where it had been "arrested" by the KGB in 1961 and sentenced to eternal imprisonment in the

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* Translated by Robert Chandler, Harper & Row, 880 pp., $22.50.

† It has just been reissued in paperback by Harper & Row, translated by Thomas P. Whitney, 247 pp., $6.95.

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archives of the political police, only to escape into freedom through a miracle that remains not fully understood. This story, of the death of a writer and the miraculous survival of his work, is the stuff of myth.

Another circumstance favorable to the novel, in my opinion, is the fact that today, even sophisticated readers have grown tired of the excessive and often pretentious complexity of literary experimentation, and have become newly receptive to old-fashioned narrative in the tradition of Leo Tolstoy. *Life and Fate* is such a narrative. In it, what is more, Grossman asks the central, final questions about human existence, questions many of us may have passed over but may be very glad to be reminded of.

As for the lesson, it is first of all connected to the metamorphosis that transformed Vasily Grossman from a more or less ordinary Soviet writer into one of the most significant Russian novelists of the 20th century, and from a slave of the state into an apostle of freedom. What interests me particularly about this shift is its Jewish aspect: what part did this Russian writer's Jewish fate play in his moral, philosophical, and artistic transformation?

VASILY GROSSMAN was born in 1905 in the Ukrainian town of Berdichev—"our kike capital," to borrow an expression of Isaac Babel's. Anyone who grew up in the Soviet Union knows the special smell of the very word "Berdichev"—the smell of a Jewish joke, not innocently funny but somehow nasty and unclean. Few are left who remember the real Berdichev, which once bore the proud name "the Jerusalem of Volhynia," but everyone knows the Berdichev of Russian anti-Semitism.

Grossman's place of birth did not, however, leave an imprint on the future writer; his family was an assimilated one, Russian rather than Jewish in cultural orientation. Grossman did not know Yiddish and received no Jewish education, neither in the usual sense of a religious upbringing nor in the broader sense of Jewish culture; the latter, along with Jewish history (or Jewish civilization, to use the still broader term of Mordecai Kaplan), passed him by.

There exist very few reminiscences of Grossman, which makes all the more valuable a memoir by Semyon Lipkin that not long ago came to the West in manuscript and is soon to be brought out (in Russian) by Ardis Press. Lipkin is a poet and translator who in recent years has embarked upon an open, fearless struggle against the state oppression of literature: he resigned publicly from the Union of Writers and he regularly publishes in the West.

In his memoir of Grossman, Lipkin asserts that Grossman's Jewish consciousness was primarily "gastronomic" in nature: that is, it expressed itself for the most part in a love of Jewish cooking. When, for instance, Grossman noticed that Lipkin owned a set of the Russian *Jewish Encyclopedia* (in a pre-revolutionary edition, it goes without saying) he asked, "Is there anything in there that's important for you?" It is true that Grossman's first literary steps were taken on Berdichev material—as in the 1928 sketch "Berdichev In All Seriousness" and the 1934 story "In the City of Berdichev"—but there he was simply, like many beginning writers, making use of a familiar background. "In the City of Berdichev" recounts an episode from the civil war from the point of view of a Russian writer; the Jewish characters in the story are nothing but stereotypes, and stereotypes, as we know, appear when a writer's main interest lies elsewhere.

Still, Vasily Grossman's Berdichev "debut" does allow us to make one significant observation, namely, that he did not feel hatred for his Jewish background. He was not ashamed of *shtetl* life and *shtetl* psychology, and did not try to distance himself from the heritage of his fathers. This is important, since a sizable group of writers who were Jewish by birth but Russian by orientation and self-definition did feel and express hostility toward their own past. (The two most famous examples are Osip Mandelstam and Edward Bagritsky.) Grossman's calm outlook and his lack of embarrassment suggest that he had an organic sense of belonging both to Soviet Russia and to Russian literature, and hence did not feel the need to prove himself.

Until the start of the war with Germany, neither Jewish interests nor Jewish themes existed for Grossman. He published a great deal; in accordance with old Russian tradition, his stories and novellas appeared first in journals, later as separate books. He also published part of a large novel that was never finished. Grossman's first steps in literature won the approval of Maxim Gorky, the patriarch of socialist realism. The critics were unfailingly attentive and well-disposed toward him: his (unfinished) novel alone garnered close to thirty laudatory reviews.

Was this success warranted, or were party critics making a mountain out of a molehill for reasons of ideology and propaganda? Rereading the prewar Grossman today, I am persuaded that given the literary context of the 1930's, he deserved not only the praise of his critics but also the love of his readers. The early Grossman is a precise and alert observer; his voice rings true, his characters are convincing and at times even original. Not just a painter from life, he is also a thinker, and his thought can attain a striking precision. He is at his best in stories about the civil war, but he was also successful at what was then called "industrial" prose. Even the novel *Stepan Kolchugin*, a typical 30's story of a working-class lad who grows into a professional revolutionary (the Soviet variant of the *Bildungsroman*), stands out from most prewar and even postwar novels, containing some fine pages and some masterfully realized characters.

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But at the same time it is obvious in these works that the young Grossman had voluntarily and wholeheartedly submitted to the ideological dictates of party consciousness, and that he was preaching Marxist writ in its Stalinist variation. And when ideology pressed in on natural talent—something that happened with a fair degree of frequency—the results were as pitiful as anything produced by such "classics" of socialist realism as Valentin Kataev's *Time, Forward!* (1932) and Ilya Ehrenburg's *Day Two* (1933).

In Grossman's 1937 "Story About Love," for example, a chemical engineer is getting married. He is boundlessly happy, not only because his romance has worked out but most of all because everywhere around him he sees the most astonishing and joyful transformations. A special joy is provided by his trip to the Ukraine. The time of this trip is noted precisely—it is 1933 (a year in which the hungry cry of millions of dispossessed Ukrainian peasants had yet to subside). As for the heroine, who unquestionably enjoys the author's sympathy, here is a sample of her thought:

> None of us think about this, but a very interesting thing has happened since the revolution: it used to be that girls would deceive themselves a lot, falling in love with actors and officers and all sorts of fools and empty talkers, things were all mixed up, and now—I don't know how to put it—now we all have a sense of the ideal man. Now a lot more often girls fall in love with better people, and everything has gotten a lot deeper, closer to the truth. . . .

Also belonging to the prewar years is a play, *If You Believe the Pythagoreans* (not published until 1946). In my opinion this play represents the worst of Vasily Grossman's literary sins. It is false through and through, replete with fake pathos and fake profundity. The contrived plot tells three parallel stories: the story of an old inventor, a chronic failure, who dies at the exact moment he achieves success; the story of a happy romance between an intellectual girl and a simple worker; and the story of an unhappy, near-suicidal romance that ends with passion vanquished through cheerful, earnest work. Matching the impossible plot is impossible dialogue. Tenderly cleaning the dirty boot of her beloved worker, the heroine teaches a lesson to an intellectual admirer whom she has spurned: "Neurotic! All your philosophical garbage is not worth this boot."

If I have spent so much time on Grossman's failures, it is only to show that despite his talent and intelligence, he was an ordinary Soviet writer who did the same things everyone did, though he sometimes did them better. In other words, there is nothing in the prewar Grossman that prefigures the future author of *Life and Fate*.

IT MIGHT seem banal to say that the war marked a turning point in the life of Vasily Grossman—after all, it broke and redirected the lives of hundreds of millions of people—but the point is nevertheless essential. The immense calamities that befell Russia in the 20's and 30's had left both man and writer untouched. Grossman was no saint (though this is what Lipkin calls him at the end of his memoir), and until he himself was hit by intense suffering, he did not feel real empathy for the suffering of other people.

Grossman spent all four war years at the front, not as a soldier but as a correspondent for the military newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* ("Red Star"). He was always in the thick of battle, in the most decisive and dangerous defense positions or in the first line of attack. He marched and rode from Gomel to Stalingrad and—in the opposite direction—from Stalingrad to Berlin. And he saw everything: the shame, despair, and horror of defeat; death, ruins, incredible brutality; and, finally, the rapture of victory and the triumph of the victors, too often unsightly, not to say loathsome. He was, along with Ilya Ehrenburg, the most famous and best-loved journalist of the war years.

Even today, when one might expect Grossman's name to be under the strictest ban, it is impossible to erase him from history—and will seemingly remain impossible as long as the memory of the war is officially sacred. Thus, to mark the fortieth anniversary of the victory over Germany, the Moscow journal *Voprosy Literaturny* ("Problems of Literature") conducted a survey of writers who had been at the front. The first question asked: of everything that you read from 1941 to 1945, what has remained in your memory above all? Of the twenty-six respondents, four named Grossman's sketches. If you keep in mind the way such surveys are conducted in the Soviet Union and how participants are selected and screened, the number is enormous.

Grossman wrote as a Russian about the sufferings and heroism of the Russian people. And a Russian is what he was, despite what may be said on the one side by anti-Semites or on the other side by collectors of Jewish "contributions" to this and that. But the war and the Holocaust also reminded Grossman of his background, and he accepted this with the seriousness and sense of duty that were his by nature.

The great 20th-century Polish poet Julian Tuwim (1894-1953), a Pole in the same way that Grossman was a Russian, wrote, as an émigré in New York in 1944, an article entitled "We, the Jews of Poland." It became the manifesto of assimilated Jewry throughout Europe, and was also well known in the Soviet Union thanks to Ehrenburg, who quoted from it at every opportunity. Tuwim declared: "There are two kinds of blood—the kind that flows in the veins and the kind that flows out of them. . . . The latter is the innocent blood of the martyred. . . . Never before has the world seen such torrents of martyred blood, and in the widest, deepest torrents flows the blood of Jews. . . ." The only binding ties, Tuwim concludes, are those based on the second kind of blood—the blood of martyrs, spilled by villains.

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During the war the "Tuwim syndrome" appeared among many Russian writers who were born Jews, but most of them got over it quickly; in Grossman it remained and grew stronger.

The reasons for this can be found in Grossman's personal circumstances, in his nature, and in the general atmosphere. To begin with, he lost his mother in the Berdichev ghetto. As a war correspondent, Grossman was among the first Russian witnesses to the aftermath of the Holocaust, among the first who saw with their own eyes the empty ghettos, the anti-tank ditches filled with corpses, the death factories. He was, indeed, the first writer in the world to tell about a death camp (in the sketch "The Treblinka Hell," August-October 1944). Even earlier, toward the end of 1943, he had begun to work with Ehrenburg on a "Black Book" about the destruction of Russian Jewry in German-occupied territory. Among the materials that Grossman prepared personally was the essay, "The Murder of the Jews in Berdichev"; he went there to look for traces or witnesses of the final hours of Ekaterina Grossman, but without success.

But no matter how terrible the war and its losses were for Grossman, the worst was yet to come. It is one thing to fight against an enemy, quite another to realize that this same enemy is living in your own camp, in your own soul. This was the fate of a small number of old Bolsheviks, whose eyes were opened when Stalin kicked them out of power and into labor camps. Grossman describes their anguish precisely and mercilessly in *Life and Fate*. But he himself knew it in its Jewish variation.

Even at the start of the war it was clear that the anti-Semitic propaganda of the Nazis, inciting the Russian people to rise up against "Jew-Bolshevism," was not meeting resistance in the Soviet Union; to this element of enemy propaganda Stalin capitulated, possibly with satisfaction. And the atmosphere at the top found a sympathetic response down below. In February 1943, at a plenary session of the presidium of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, Ehrenburg spoke of the rise in anti-Semitism in the country and the urgent need to counter it. By the eve of victory, anti-Semitism in the USSR had taken firm if unofficial root as a factor of social life and of state policy. At first, its only manifestation was a negative one, to be found in the silence that surrounded the subject of the Holocaust. The meaning of this silence was lost on no one. But Jewish matters in general, even the word "Jew," were avoided as far as possible in any context.

What happened next is well known: the campaigns against those "lacking in party values" or "bowing before Western bourgeois culture" (the campaigns bore indistinct but still sufficiently legible traces of Judeophobia); the murder of Solomon Mikhoels, chairman of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee; the dismantling of the committee and the shut-down of what was by then (November 1948) the only Jewish press in the country, accompanied by a real typographic pogrom;* the mass arrests of Jewish writers and other cultural figures. All this, naturally, was carried out under the veil of secrecy: there was no word in the newspapers about reprisals against the Jews. But in the last days of January 1949 the pogrom reached a new stage, and there began a total and by now completely open war against the Jews which has entered Soviet history under the name of the "struggle against cosmopolitanism." Unofficial state anti-Semitism became shamelessly demonstrative, leading to the Prague "Zionist" trial (November-December 1952), the "discovery" of a plot of Jewish doctor-murderers in Moscow (January 13, 1953), and the near-Nazi raging of the Soviet press on this occasion. There is evidence that all this was preparatory to a massive deportation of Jews to Siberia, which would have taken place had the Jewish God not removed the Soviet Hitler on March 5, 1953.

This, then, is the background for the private drama of a Russian writer, the son of a Jewish woman murdered in the Berdichev ghetto.

IN 1946, at the zenith of his honorably-won popularity, Grossman published the play he wrote before the war—and fell under the murderous fire of critics, who, following on the heels of Andrei Zhdanov, Stalin's commissar of culture, accused Grossman of propounding an idealist philosophy hostile to Marxism-Leninism. The accusation was utterly groundless, as absurd as accusing him of dealing in narcotics. For an orthodox Marxist-Leninist, as Grossman then was, this made it all the more insulting. But at least the attacks lacked overtones of anti-Semitism.

The second blow, however, left not the slightest doubt on that score. Right after the battle of Stalingrad, Grossman had begun work on a novel about the war and about Stalingrad. All the "black years" of Stalin's postwar reign were devoted to this work. The novel, *For a Righteous Cause*, was published in 1952, in four issues of *Novy Mir* ("New World"), the journal then edited by Aleksandr Tvardovsky. And both Tvardovsky (who in 1962 would publish Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*) and Aleksandr Fadeev (the chief master of the Union of Writers, who would kill himself in 1956 after Khrushchev's speech acknowledging Stalin's crimes) considered Grossman's novel an outstanding example of socialist realism. The critics also exulted: "the birth of an epic," "the historical truth," "an expressive image of the great Stalin. . . ."

It is absurd to think that in the terrible year of 1952 someone would dare to praise a book that

* This was when the plates for *The Black Book*, which had long been ready, were destroyed. The book was never printed in its homeland either in Russian or Yiddish; it came out in Russian in Israel in 1980, and in English in 1982 (Schocken).

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differed one iota from the ideological and aesthetic standard established by those in power. And indeed, *For a Righteous Cause* is a completely orthodox Soviet epic narrative. Although at the time its purely artistic qualities were obvious and even striking, particularly when placed against the background of the sterile or (better) moribund prose being produced in the postwar years, today, after more than three decades, its appeal is significantly diminished. Despite some fine passages, the novel as a whole gives an unpleasant and even labored impression, and is plagued by a wooden rhetoric indistinguishable from Soviet officialese.

But in fact none of this meant anything; something else determined the fate of the novel. According to Lipkin, Tvardovsky wanted to secure the support of Mikhail Sholokhov, the author of *And Quiet Flows the Don*, who also happened to be on the editorial board of *Novy Mir*; he sent him the manuscript of *For a Righteous Cause*. The "living classic" answered briefly, his primary objection being, Look whom you've allowed to write about Stalingrad. It was a precise and ominous warning: a Jew had no right to depict and glorify the victory of the Russian people.

Those at the top reasoned in exactly the same way. The novel and its excessively positive reviews provoked the wrath of Malenkov, Stalin's right hand, and soon Grossman was attacked from all sides. Everyone joined in: the major newspapers and journals, enemies as well as former friends and protectors, literary "comrades" and readers. Among the accusations of ideological errors and artistic weakness, one in particular gave a key to what was going on: the author, by concentrating on a character named Shtrum, "a mediocrity full of petty passions," had left in the shadows the "powerful Russian Soviet man." In the heated atmosphere of those days this was decoded instantaneously and unambiguously: a Jew had made the central character a Jew.

Grossman was being beaten to death and would have been killed—that is, arrested—but, as I already noted, the Jewish God intervened and Stalin died. Grossman was saved from literary and actual death, the novel was rehabilitated and published as a separate book, and on his fiftieth birthday (1955) the author was given a decoration. In Soviet terms, everything had worked out well. The party punished, the party forgave, and the person who got spat on was expected to wipe his face and pretend that nothing had happened. In Grossman's literary generation, everyone acted that way.

GROSSMAN acted differently. The party had forgiven, but he did not forget and he did not forgive, and the experience gained from his collision now with not one but two totalitarian powers he brought to the continuation of *For a Righteous Cause*, the novel *Life and Fate*.

He worked on the book for about ten years, finishing it at the beginning of 1960. By October of that year he had reread the enormous manuscript, made his corrections, and sent it on to the journal *Znamya* ("Banner"). The novel was read by the main editor and two associate editors. So great was their horror that, not even showing the manuscript to anyone else, they sent it right off to the cultural section of the Central Committee. There a decision was made: let the author go free but arrest the novel, and do it in such a way that not a trace remains.

In February 1961, two KGB functionaries dressed in civilian clothes appeared at Grossman's door. The search was short, a little over an hour. "They took," writes Lipkin, "not only the typewritten copies but also the handwritten copy, the rough drafts of discarded chapters, and all preparatory materials, outlines, and sketches." Then they asked if there were any other copies and if so, where. Grossman answered: at the typist's and at *Novy Mir*. They set off for the typist's together with Grossman; to *Novy Mir* they went themselves and ordered the safe opened.

Grossman tried to fight. He went to the Union of Writers. He was seen by a triumvirate headed by Georgy Markov, who was the ruler of the Union then and remains so to this day. He was told that in the present complex time, publication of the novel would bring harm to the state; publication might be considered, if ever, in another 250 years. He wrote a letter to Khrushchev, which Lipkin includes in his memoir. The letter helps us to understand how a man in his right mind with a working memory could take such an insane step—that is, how he could hand over to literary bureaucrats a manuscript whose conception of history was diametrically opposed to all official Soviet ideology with its attendant dogmas and myths. For both Lipkin and Tvardovsky, on reading the novel, had responded in one voice that there would be no chance of publishing it.

Grossman wrote to Khrushchev after the 22nd party congress (October 17-31, 1961) during which the policy of de-Stalinization, begun by Khrushchev five years earlier in the famous "secret" address to the 20th congress, was decisively upheld. His letter appeals to both of Khrushchev's speeches. He had, he writes, begun work on the novel before Stalin's death, without the slightest expectation of seeing it published, but the address to the 20th congress had aroused hope in him, and "your address to the 22nd congress strengthened my belief that the book *Life and Fate* did not contradict the truth you revealed, and that truth was the property of the present day, not something to be put off for 250 years."

From the letter it is clear that Grossman really believed in the good intentions of the post-Stalinist leadership, in the depth and irreversibility of the changes, and in the idea that the shepherds, yesterday's executioners, wanted the whole truth as much as did the flock. It would be wrong to write off this belief as the naiveté of a holy fool; there was some basis for it. Let us not forget that exactly one year later, in November 1962, Tvar-

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dovsky published *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, marking the first time the censored Soviet press told the truth about the Gulag. For Grossman, the issue of *Novy Mir* containing Solzhenitsyn's story may have been proof that he had not been crazy when he entrusted his book to the editors of the Moscow journal.

Nonetheless he *was* crazy, a "fool of God" in the most profound meaning of that Russian expression. "My book is not a political book. I . . . speak in it about people, about their sorrows, joys, delusions, deaths," he wrote to Khrushchev. Of course he had written about people, but about people oppressed, enslaved, and destroyed by the state—the *Soviet* state. He had written about the delusions that resulted from their submission, voluntary or forced, to the dogmas of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. His book was a thousand times more dangerous than *Ivan Denisovich*, which could be interpreted as a condemnation merely of what was past and gone.

His other crazy idea was to have sent the novel to *Znamya*, considered rightly a centrist journal, weak, subservient, and dull. True, he had had a falling-out with Tvardovsky, the editor of *Novy Mir*, but this was secondary. As Lipkin informs us, "Grossman was possessed by the strange thought that our so-called progressive editors were in fact more cowardly than the orthodox reactionaries; that the latter had the strength and the daring of bandits, and would be more willing to take a risk." So he turned to the boss of *Znamya*. He would have been better off delivering the book to the KGB with his own hands.

The response to his letter to Khrushchev took the form of an audience with the main party ideologue, Mikhail Suslov, who advised Grossman to forget about the novel and repeated the verdict of his "brother writers": we will publish it in two hundred or three hundred years, not before. Suslov turned out to be a poor prophet, just as the KGB bloodhounds proved insufficiently alert. One copy of *Life and Fate* remained at large. Our primary authority in this matter, Semyon Lipkin, informs us in a somewhat enigmatic and offhand way that "it would have been better if the people who managed to preserve the novel had found the courage to worry about the fate of the manuscript sooner. . . ." Who these people were we still do not know, but we do know where they went for help; the manuscript was placed on microfilm and its journey to the West was organized by the writer Vladimir Voinovich, who now lives in West Germany.

The plot of *Life and Fate*, as I have already mentioned, forms a continuous whole with *For a Righteous Cause*, constituting an episode from the life of an extended family and taking place in a time frame of no more than a year. Without the first novel it is sometimes hard to understand the plot lines of the second, yet in fact the author does not insist on a prior acquaintance with the earlier novel, for the characters of the later one are quite cut off from the earlier images of themselves. The essence of the change does not lie in those few characters whose past lives actually get rewritten (thus in the first novel the eldest son is a high-placed manager who dies in his office of a heart attack; in the second he is shot during the Terror for "spying and plotting") but in an internal transformation. The masks characteristic of Stalin's day have been dropped; immobility and Bolshevik "steadfastness" have given way to historicity, development, and the Tolstoyan "dialectic of the soul."

This change can be seen in any one character, from the most central to the most marginal, from those loved tenderly by the author to those he hates, but it is particularly striking in the depiction of two old Bolsheviks, Mostovskoy and Krymov.

Mostovskoy's past includes a stint in the revolutionary underground, Siberian exile, emigration, and repression, but he himself sees his tangled path as an unbroken line of glorious progress. No amount of misfortune can shake his doctrinaire, anti-historical optimism. What is more, everyone around him is infected by his blind faith and listens to him greedily, as though he were an oracle. Krymov is a former member of the Comintern, now also out of power, who seems a bit more complicated than Mostovskoy. He is "tormented by contradictions," but even his contradictions are artificial, "bookish," and in the end he is comforted by nothing less than quotations from Lenin.

This, at any rate, is how it is in *For a Righteous Cause*. In *Life and Fate*, Mostovskoy finds himself in a German concentration camp. Though even there he retains his strength of will, his unflinching spirit and authority, he is consumed by doubt: was it corruption or cowardice that made him idolize the party and cling to "the Leninist way" like a stupid child to its mother's skirts? And when he is called in for a talk by a higher-up in the SS, a Nazi intellectual who argues in the most convincing fashion that there is no real difference between Communism and National Socialism, the conversation becomes in equal degree a devil's temptation and an objectivization of an internal split, like the conversation between Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov and the devil. Mostovskoy only thinks that he withstood temptation: in fact his faith has been shaken. He is incapable of arguing with the SS man; he has nothing to say beyond "Get thee behind me, Satan." And yet he has been incomparably lucky. He has landed in an enemy concentration camp and not in a Russian one, as did hundreds of thousands of other steadfast Leninists and Stalinists—like, for example, Krymov.

The maturation of Krymov, the suffering of this "stepson of the times" (as he calls himself), represents Grossman at the height of his psychological powers. If the term "Rubashov complex" (named for Koestler's hero in *Darkness at Noon*) has come to be used as a shorthand for the capitulation and

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confession of the revolutionary old guard during Stalin's show trials, then we surely have an equal need for the term "Krymov complex" to describe the steady and merciless alienation from all that is life—a process that would be unstoppable were it not halted, as in a fairy tale, by a tiny drop of "absurd kindness."

Human kindness has, indeed, become one of the two foundations of Grossman's new world view; such kindness defies logic and stands in opposition to goodness with a capital G, to utopian universalist ideas and projects for general happiness. The second foundation is freedom, opposed in the contemporary world by totalitarianism with its false myths and false scale of values. Nothing, in Grossman's view, can kill either kindness or the urge for freedom in the human soul: "History has not been the struggle of good to overcome evil. The history of the human race has been the struggle of immense evil to crush the small grain of real humanity. If, even now, the humanity of human beings has not been killed, then evil will not be victorious." So runs the verdict of a prisoner in a Nazi death camp.

Grossman's "absurd kindness" makes it possible to look even at an enemy with a measure of sympathy. The character Dementiy Getmanov, once a regional party secretary in the Ukraine and now the political commissar of a tank corps, is a literary achievement of the first magnitude. Getmanov *is* the "leadership role of the party" as it looks and operates in reality, the "vivid image of the Communist" that Soviet critics have tirelessly exhorted writers to create, now as well as then—except that these critics have in mind the party-state mythology and not what is really there. Yet for all that Grossman's portrait smacks of an exposé, it lacks the tone of mockery and the grotesque exaggeration that characterize the work of so many of the recently enlightened and converted. Getmanov is not a monster, an offspring of the devil *à la* Dostoevsky or Solzhenitsyn. He is palpably natural; he has a power and charm that are difficult to ignore, and in his own way he is completely human. Like the other characters, he has been drawn from inside. It is, indeed, hard to imagine how Grossman managed to immerse himself so deeply into something he found so hateful. Perhaps, like the great Christian moralists, he learned to hate the sin but not the sinner.

Grossman openly follows Tolstoy in his general approach, his mode of composition, and particularly in the innumerable digressions in which he unceremoniously breaks off the illusion of epic and sets out his own convictions on history, politics, and society. But equally he sees himself as a follower of Chekhov, who, for the new Grossman, the Grossman of *Life and Fate*, was Russia's greatest writer. In the Chekhovian spirit, he wants to "bring the vastness of Russia, with all its classes, estates, and ages, into our consciousness." In this novel he enters into the mind of a theoretical physicist, a worker at an electric station, a seventeen-year-old adolescent, an old woman, a young girl in love, and a bereaved mother at her son's grave. There is something greater here than the simple talent of an observer; it is a kind of clairvoyance, an absolute empathy, the elevated and elevating knowledge of catharsis. It seems to me that in its purity of tone and its complete freedom from falsity and affectation, *Life and Fate* has no equals in contemporary Russian literature.

But how is Jewish fate reflected in this Russian novel? What part did it play in the transformation of Vasily Grossman?

Among the digressions in *Life and Fate* are two chapters about anti-Semitism. One concerns the new unity of the Jewish people, a unity imposed by executioners on those condemned to death. This imposed unity gives rise in turn to a voluntary one, accepted consciously and tranquilly by those who had long forgotten their Jewishness. The mother of Viktor Shtrum (the novel's chief character and an obvious stand-in for Grossman) writes him a letter that through some miracle reaches him from the ghetto:

> I never felt like a Jew. I grew up with Russian girlfriends, my favorite poets were Pushkin and Nekrasov, and the play I cried over along with the whole audience, a convention of Russian doctors, was *Uncle Vanya*, with Stanislavsky. And, Vitenka, a long time ago when I was fourteen years old, our family was about to emigrate to South America, I told Papa, "I'm never leaving Russia, I'd rather die." And I didn't go. But now in these terrible days I have been overcome by a mother's tenderness for the Jewish people. I never knew this love before. It reminds me of my love for you, my dear son.

A mother's love and kindness, the most irrational, "absurd" love possible, is awakened in this old woman who has long forgotten that she is Jewish. Her child is the entire suffering nation, all that is good about it and all that is bad.

The same thing, in essence, occurs with another completely assimilated Jewish woman. At the entrance to the gas chamber she is struck by an astonishing vision:

> In the nakedness of young and old bodies . . . one could see the hidden body of the nation, no longer veiled by clothes. It seemed to Sofya Osipovna that the feeling "this is me" linked her not with any one person, but with the whole nation. It was the naked body of the nation, at the same time young and old, living, growing, strong and frail, curly-headed and grey-headed, beautiful and hideous, strong and emaciated.

"This is me": Sofya Osipovna recognizes herself as a Jew, as part of something that "never changes" despite the Holocaust and all previous persecutions, despite assimilation and desertion. And when this woman who never knew love or motherhood dies holding someone else's child, her thought—"I have become a mother"—refers not only to the

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little boy David whom she "picked up" in the transport to Treblinka, but to her people.

I believe that all this refers to Grossman as well, and indeed to many, maybe even the majority, of assimilated Jews when faced with the fact of the Holocaust. Above and beyond the feelings of the prodigal son who has involuntarily returned come the feelings of a mother who has found her child, a child who is in mortal danger and whom the mother is ready to defend to the end, at any cost.

Grossman's own experience informs other aspects of the novel as well, perhaps most notably Viktor Shtrum's astonishment and anger at his first bouts with everyday and official anti-Semitism, and the new sense of his own Jewishness that arises therefrom. Grossman's past is likewise the source for a fictional event of major importance. At one point in the novel Shtrum commits an ignoble act—he signs an official letter denouncing the "scandalous fabrications" of the Western press concerning political repression in the Soviet Union. He understands what he has done: he has made a conscious and voluntary choice to join with those in power, and by doing so he has lost his inner freedom, his conscience, and his right to the respect of his friends. He thinks: how could he have condemned others for their meekness and servility, how could he have "paraded his purity and courage in front of them"? He is saved (for the second time!) by thoughts of his mother. Afraid at first to think about her, on account of the "base and pitiful thing he did," he finally sees "that it was not too late, that he still had the strength to raise his head, to remain his mother's son." And he says, to himself and to her: "Well, we'll see, maybe I do have the strength, Mama, your strength."

Now, thanks to Lipkin, we know the source of this episode. Soon after January 13, 1953 (the date the doctors' plot was announced) Grossman received a telephone call from the historian Isaac Mintz, who asked him to come to the editorial offices of *Pravda*. Gathered there was a large group of famous writers, scholars, artists, and actors of Jewish origin. Mintz read a letter addressed to Stalin: the doctor-murderers must be punished without mercy, but the Jews as a people are not guilty, there are many honest Soviet patriots among them, and so on. Lipkin writes: "Deciding in a moment of blindness that the death of a few people could save a nation in distress, Grossman —along with the majority of those in the room— signed the letter. . . . To the end of his life he tormented himself for this act."

Shtrum's silent appeal to his mother are his last words in the novel. With them, all the Jewish motifs of *Life and Fate* are brought together and tied in a knot. The living are indebted to the dead, and the nightmare of the Holocaust must be more than just a subject for historical inquiry; it necessitates action and choice. One cannot be at the same time the son of a Jewish woman murdered in Berdichev and a "Russian Soviet patriot" in the image of a Zhdanov or a Sholokhov—or of their equivalents today.

Moveover, one cannot, like Solzhenitsyn, simply cross out the word "Soviet." In *August 1914* Solzhenitsyn gives the Jews a choice. "Living in *this* country, you have to decide once and for all: do you belong to it with all your soul or not?" Let us put aside the question of whether such a choice is actually possible—the wholehearted Jewish assimilationists of the 1860's and 70's got their response during the pogroms of 1881-82, and it was a response of all Russia, from its darkest depths to its most enlightened heights. Let us instead note that even if it were possible, to say to Russia, "I am yours," surrendering oneself fully would mean forgetting one's debt to the bones in the ditches and the ravines, to those who have turned into ashes, and renouncing the power given by a mother's love.

Had Grossman not felt the blows of his Jewish fate—blows that came from the West and the East, from Nazism and Communism—had he not accepted this fate as a matter of free, conscious, and responsible choice, and had he not thereby become a Russian writer of Jewish fate, he would never have achieved the creative strength—the artistic transformation of "your strength, Mama"—evident in his final work. Not only the "Jewish" pages but the entire novel shows the strength of the transformed Grossman. His own suffering, his own experience of injustice, opened his eyes to other people's pain and his soul to the victims of other injustices. The source of this new, universal vision is Jewish fate, but as a *writer* Grossman remains Russian, a part of Russian literature. The Jewish characters, episodes, and motifs of the novel are only details in a monumental picture, an all-Russian, Soviet epic. I would go so far as to say that Grossman in *Life and Fate* is the first free voice of the Soviet nation, the first sounds of freedom and kindness torn from a throat stopped by terror. The voice of a Jew, but not a Jewish voice.

After the arrest of the novel, Grossman had only three and a half years left to live. He was alone, impoverished, depressed to the point of despair. He suffered unbearably before his death from cancer, which was almost certainly a result of the murder of *Life and Fate*. Once he told his friend, the writer Boris Yampolsky, "I've been strangled and killed in a doorway." Still he kept on working. In those years he finished the second, greatly expanded version of *Forever Flowing*, wrote several stories (some of which remain unpublished, locked up in state archives), and completed a travel sketch about Armenia called "Peace Be With You." Everything that has come to light either in the West or in the Soviet Union, where Grossman was occasionally published both before and after his death, shows that he did not betray the vision or the moral triumph of *Life and Fate*.

To repeat, *Forever Flowing* is the story of a

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man's return from a camp after thirty years of imprisonment. It is a meditative work, almost without a plot, and it reads like an intensive commentary on *Life and Fate*—which, however, does not detract from its independent significance. Perhaps the appearance of *Life and Fate* in English will again call attention to this greatly undervalued work, which among other things contains Grossman's thoughts on Russian history and most specifically on Lenin.

In outline, Grossman's historical scheme looks like this. When Russia's thinkers and prophets, her finest minds and hearts, praised the Russian soul and predicted a great future for it, they failed to see that this "Russian soul was a thousand-year-old slave." But that was why the choice of the Russian soul fell on Lenin, even though "dozens and maybe scores of revolutionary teachings, faiths, and leaders passed like so many suitors before the young Russia, newly released from the yoke of czardom." Lenin, though he hated old Russia "with all the strength of his fanatic's soul," merely facilitated its development on a colossal scale by bringing about the new victory of slavery over freedom. And Stalin, "who united in himself a European Marxist and an Asian," was Lenin's true heir, brilliantly completing the work he had begun. There is, in truth, no such thing as "the enigmatic Russian soul." If the French or the English had found themselves in the same situation, they would have suffered the same fate, for "souls like those are born everywhere in the world, wherever there is slavery."

These thoughts belong solely to the second variant of *Forever Flowing*, and indeed in his letter to Khrushchev, Grossman appeals to Lenin as a defender of democratic freedoms. But they exist in nascent form in *Life and Fate*, and this should be emphasized, since in the novel that was naively meant for publication and in the novella written in secret (maybe for himself, maybe for future generations) Grossman is the same person. He has nothing of the "double-dealing" nature that so often marks Soviet dissidents of both liberal and conservative leanings.

Still more important, perhaps, is that *Forever Flowing* shows not the slightest trace of hatred for Russia, but only an infinite pity born of love. Despite this, Russian nationalists, particularly those now in emigration, gave the novella an indifferent reception on its publication in 1970, and have also been completely cold to *Life and Fate*. For them, Grossman is a Russophobe because he is not Russian. We know (again, thanks to Lipkin) that Grossman was ecstatic about Solzhenitsyn (". . . a mature, immense talent. Which one of us can equal him?") but I more than doubt that Solzhenitsyn reciprocates his feelings. And quite recently, Vladimir Maximov, the novelist and editor of the Paris-based Russian journal *Kontinent*, has branded Grossman's bitter thoughts on Russian history an "openly racist declaration."

I DO NOT know if the Armenian travel sketch, "Peace Be With You" (1962-63), is the last thing to be written by Grossman, but it has become his testament. Looking back at all he has seen and done, his gaze is as intense and serious as before, but now, for the first time in his life as a writer, there is a faint smile of self-irony about his lips. He writes here about the martyred Armenian people, scattered over the globe, and of course about his own martyred people, the Jews.

The few sentences about the Jews became the occasion for a final clash between Grossman and the state. The censor demanded that they be removed, the author refused categorically, and the sketch saw the light of day only after Grossman's death—in its crippled version. We do not know what the missing phrases were, but what remains is eloquent enough. Here is one paragraph, placed at the very end of the sketch where it might resonate with greater force and stay longer in the memory:

> I bow low before the Armenian peasants, who at a wedding celebration in their mountain village spoke about the suffering of the Jews. . . . I bow to everyone who solemnly, sadly, listened in silence to these speeches. . . . I give thanks for the mournful words about those who perished in clay ravines, in gas chambers, and in ditches—I give thanks in the name of those living who have been burned by the inhuman words of scorn and hatred: "Too bad that Hitler didn't finish you off."

This Russian writer of Jewish fate does not want much. He does not want the voice crying out in pain to be silenced, the past wiped out, the present shown bright and cloudless. But he also does not want the Jews to be alone, isolated in their special suffering; if they cannot be comforted, then at least they can be encouraged by the sympathy and kindness of other peoples. These small requests were and remain an open challenge, not only to those in power but to Russian nationalists of all stripes, from official to dissident.

Defiled by the censor's pencil, the testament of Vasily Grossman still embraces and reflects his entire life. He understood his life in the strictest sense of service and duty and accepted the tragedy of his fate. But he was unable to see its grandeur, which can be appreciated only by the readers of his novel.

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E.B. White, Dark & Lite

Joseph Epstein

When E.B. White died, at the age of eighty-six, on October 1, 1985, his obituarist in the New York *Times* referred to him as "one of the nation's most precious literary resources," and the newspaper backed up the statement by running a six-column-across obituary of the kind it generally grants only to indisputably major statesmen and artists. The following day *Times* editors weighed in with "The Elements of White," an editorial that quoted E.B. White in favor of careful prose style and world government and against armed slaughter and destruction. The *Nation*, too, ran an editorial on its front page marking White's death; it used the occasion to point out that the human antonym of E.B. White is New York's Mayor Edward Koch and ended by quoting the penultimate sentence from *Charlotte's Web*, one of White's three books for children: "It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer." In the public sense, the *Nation* averred, E.B. White was both. An editorial cartoon by Duffy originally printed in the Des Moines *Register* but picked up around the country—the version I saw was in the Chicago *Tribune*—depicted, again from *Charlotte's Web*, the pig Wilbur looking rather sad beneath a spider web hanging from the doorway of a barn in the middle of which is written, SOME WRITER.

Some, one might add, career. Famously shy though he was said to have been, E.B. White may nonetheless have also been the most honored American writer of our time. He had more medals than a Soviet marshal: among them, the National Medal for Literature, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the gold medal for essays and criticism of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He was awarded a special—and, so far as I know, unique—Pulitzer Prize for "the body of his work." He had honorary degrees from Harvard on down. His books sold very well and his children's books exceedingly well—in the millions, in fact. *The Elements of Style*, a rather bare-bones writing manual originally produced by his Cornell professor William Strunk, which White brought up to date and to which he added material, was a selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. Any high-school or college anthology that does not contain at least one E.B. White essay—usually the one on his Model T Ford, "Farewell, My Lovely," or "The Death of a Pig"—qualifies as something of a rare book.

Then there is the *New Yorker*, in which the vast majority of White's writing initially appeared and on which he was a major—in some ways, a decisive—influence. Although never formally an editor of the *New Yorker*, White, who came to work for the magazine shortly after its founding in 1925, contributed light pieces and poems and (later) "Letters from the East"; he supplied the captions for a great many cartoons and the tag lines for the unconsciously comical prose published elsewhere that the magazine calls "newsbreaks"; and for decades he wrote the "Notes and Comment" section of "Talk of the Town," which is the closest thing the *New Yorker* has had in the way of an official voice.

Oddly enough, the most disappointing obituary about E.B. White was the one that appeared in the *New Yorker*. A splendid fringe benefit of working for any length of time on the editorial side of the *New Yorker* is that one receives one's own specimen of what are easily the most beautiful obituaries written in the United States. But the obituary accorded to E.B. White, though written by three different hands, somehow fell well short of the mark. The first of the three wrote of White as "an early and brave defender of civil liberties, social justice, and the environment" and also acknowledged his doing "as much as any other single writer to set the tone and create the spirit of the *New Yorker*." The third contributor wrote of taking two children, both of them devoted readers of White's children's books, on a visit to White's farm in Maine, and closed by noting that even though White was not personally on the premises, the farm itself, made immortal by his books, was enough to satisfy the children. He also wrote of White's prose style, remarking that "he seemed to take down the fences of manner and propriety and pomposity in writing." According to this contributor, it was said of E.B. White that he wrote as if neither Marx nor Freud had ever lived, yet if presented with this as a criticism, White "would not then set about becoming more

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political or more at one with his pysche." Earlier, the first contributor had written that E.B. White "ran counter to our century's fashion for literary despair, and did not try to tamper with his inexplicably sunny inclinations."

The phrase "inexplicably sunny inclinations" caught my attention, as football announcers are wont to say when a quarterback is blindsidedly tackled by a 280-pound defensive lineman. I have recently been reading through the works of E.B. White, a writer of whom I hitherto had a most blurry and inexact picture, and the one thing that can be unequivocally said about him is that one has to search very sedulously indeed to find a gloomier writer than E.B. White. The gloom is not merely incidental but pervasive in his writing. He is, moreover, a relentless preacher, as perhaps befits one whose own favorite writer was that consummate American preacher in prose, Henry David Thoreau. Isaac Rosenfeld's review of *Wild Flag*, a 1946 collection of White's "Notes and Comment" editorials from the *New Yorker*, was entitled "Chopping a Teakettle," from the Yiddish phrase *hacken a tcheinik*. "Not only does he chop away with an unfailing stroke," Rosenfeld wrote, "but he manages to keep a cloud of steam issuing from the spout as he works." The editorials in *Wild Flag* are about world government, but before he lays down his ax, White has worked on several teakettles: the environment, bureaucracy, the horrors of modern life. He turns out to be something of a Jeremiah, but with a plain prose style.

This is not the figure, the precious literary resource, most people think of when they think of E.B. White. Most people, I suspect, think of E.B. White as the archetypical *New Yorker* writer of the early days of that magazine; not quite so anarchical in his humor as James Thurber, or so wickedly witty as Wolcott Gibbs, but very clever, always in good taste, and never heavy—a White Lite, to adapt both the concept and the spelling favored by the American low-calorie beer industry. Later, when White removed himself from New York to live on a farm on Allen's Cove, near North Brooklin, Maine, he became a naturalized New Englander, a man who, it was believed, lived close to the earth and whose prose, it was also believed, took on some of the good sense that comes from plain living among plain people. His success with his children's books served to enhance his reputation—and, into the bargain, to authenticate his sensitivity. You cannot, after all, fool children about these things, can you? There was, then, something of a saintly aura about White, and the older he grew, the more honored he became, the saintlier he seemed. "I wouldn't mind being as old as E.B. White," said Kurt Vonnegut, "if I could actually *be* E.B. White."

E(LWYN) B(ROOKS) WHITE was born in 1899, the sixth, the last, and the late-life child of an upper-middle-class family in Mount Vernon, New York. He was brought up in a rambling Victorian house. His father, who had begun to prosper when White was born, was the general manager and vice-president of Horace Waters & Company, a firm that sold musical instruments. The single blot on White's otherwise pacific childhood was that his father was charged with, but later acquitted of, fraud in connection with a stock transaction—an event he harks back to in *The Trumpet of the Swan*, the last of his children's books.

From his father, who each summer took the family on vacation to Maine, White acquired a love of the natural world and a respect for order and precision. (In the White family, when a child did not know the meaning of a word, he was sent upstairs to consult *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*.) From his mother, whose own father was a painter, he acquired a respect for art, shyness, and a strong strain of hypochondria that was never to leave him. (Interesting, is it not, that hypochondriacs seem to be so long-lived?) The large house in Mount Vernon had an expansive lawn, a fine garden, servants, animals—all the things, together with parental love, that ought to make for boyhood happiness, but in E.B. White's case did not, or at least not quite.

Scott Elledge, E.B. White's biographer,* begins the second chapter of his book by remarking, "White was born lucky, as he has often said, but he was also born scared. . . ." And it is true that in his portraits of and random comments about his youth, a combination of melancholy and anxiety hangs over everything. He suffered from hay fever; he had a terror of public speaking; he was more than normally bashful around girls; he felt guilty that his dog, not permitted the run of the house, had to be locked in the basement; he feared failure in school. E.B. White had what in 19th-century novels used to be called a very delicate nervous organization. Although not friendless, he seemed most at ease when solitary. He was good at writing, that solitary act, and derived much pleasure from being able to formulate on a page what he often could not say in person. Skating and canoeing, two other solitary acts, were his favorite pastimes. But he spent even more time tending to and sometimes just quietly watching animals. In a memoir of his own boyhood entitled "A Boy I Knew," he wrote, "This boy felt for animals a kinship he never felt for people."

E.B. White may have overdone in his writing the true extent of his shyness as a boy and young man, for his career at college tends to belie his own picture of himself as a youth almost perpetually in the habit of retreat. White went to Cornell, where his two older brothers had preceded him. There he was able to slip the milquetoast name of Elwyn, which his friends exchanged for Andy,

* *E.B. White: A Biography*, Norton, 400 pp., $22.50 ($9.95 paper).

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after Andrew White, then the powerful president of Cornell. The year of his matriculation was 1917; the United States had just entered World War I, but White did not weigh enough to pass the army physical. With some prodding from his sister he joined a fraternity, a good one, Phi Gamma Delta, and was later elected president. His second year in school he was named to the board of editors of the Cornell *Daily Sun*, and the following year was elected editor-in-chief. He wrote many of the paper's editorials, and for one of them he won the Arthur Brisbane award. One of his teachers offered to find him a job as an English instructor, but he had already settled on a career in journalism. The early 1920's were still a time when young people who felt the urge to write could find a home on a newspaper. Willa Cather and Theodore Dreiser began on newspapers and so, later, did Ernest Hemingway.

A poet always cheats his boss, a Russian proverb holds, and other writers may not be much better. Dreiser once reviewed a play he never saw because he wished not to leave the company of a lady friend; it was his misfortune to awake the next morning in her bed to discover that the play he reviewed had never got to town because the train carrying the theatrical group had been snowed in. E.B. White, on his first assignment for his first job (with United Press), took the wrong train, blew the assignment, and quit. White later wrote features for the Seattle *Times*, publicity for the American Legion News Service, and copy for advertising agencies, but he seemed to fit in nowhere. His leading feelings as a young man seemed to be doubt and self-disgust. Like a great many young men and women, then as now, he had a strong desire to write with nothing particular in mind to write about.

In these, his fledgling years, E.B. White was, as always, self-conscious but very little the conscious artist. Although he was of the generation of E.E. Cummings and Edmund Wilson, Wallace Stevens and William Faulkner, high art was never the name of his desire. He had no wish to write the intricate poem or the experimental novel, and so far removed from great artistic ambitions was he that (he once claimed) it took him fully fourteen months to read *Anna Karenina*. What did attract him was the world of smart journalism, the world of H.L. Mencken and Don Marquis and Christopher Morley and F.P.A., in whose New York *World* column, "The Conning Tower," White had published an occasional squib. These were the days, recall, of the wits of the Algonquin round table: Robert Benchley, Alexander Woollcott, Dorothy Parker, Heywood Broun, Frank Sullivan, and Ring Lardner. It was in the atmosphere of smart journalism, and through the efforts of such writers, that Harold Ross planned and brought to fruition his dream for the weekly magazine first published on February 19, 1925 and known as the *New Yorker*.

E.B. White's first piece in the *New Yorker* appeared in its tenth issue. It was one of those light comic compositions that at the *New Yorker* are called "casuals"; it was about how a copywriter might conduct an advertising campaign for Spring. But White's real breakthrough at the *New Yorker* came with the publication, in the last issue of 1925, of a 650-word piece entitled "Child's Play," which was about the efforts of a man (the author) to retain his savoir-faire when in a New York restaurant—Child's, in fact—a glass of buttermilk is spilled on his blue serge suit. The delicate touch of humor in the piece, its precision and perfect tone of self-mockery, captivated the magazine's chief literary editor, Katharine Angell, who suggested to Harold Ross that he hire the author as a regular member of the *New Yorker* staff. Ross did. White and Katharine Angell eventually married, but the marriage of E.B. White with the *New Yorker* was perhaps the most crucial event in the magazine's history.

ALTHOUGH the *New Yorker* has accommodated in its pages writers as various in style and intellectual range as Hannah Arendt and S.J. Perelman, A.J. Liebling and Kenneth Tynan, Harold Rosenberg and Garrison Keillor—its editorial capaciousness has been part of its genius—it is the magazine's tone that has been chiefly responsible for its success. That tone was early set by E.B. White, and even today, decades after White ceased regularly to supply the magazine with the editorials known as "Notes and Comment," the reigning tone of the *New Yorker* remains White's. The tone itself is an attempt at a compound of whimsy and common sense, modesty and decency, from which pretentiousness and heavy-handedness generally are extruded. The tone shimmers with an implied sensitivity, the chief implication being that we readers are ourselves highly sensitive characters—intelligent, good-humored, tasteful. It is a tone that encapsulates an attitude, and about this attitude no one has written better than Robert Warshow, in a 1947 review of E.B. White's *Wild Flag* in *Partisan Review*:

> The *New Yorker* has always dealt with experience not by trying to understand it but by prescribing the attitude to be adopted toward it. This makes it possible to feel intelligent without thinking, and it is a way of making everything tolerable, for the assumption of a suitable attitude toward experience can give one the illusion of having dealt with it adequately. The gracelessness of capitalism becomes an entirely external phenomenon, a spectacle that one can observe without being touched—above all, without feeling really threatened. Even one's own incompetence becomes pleasant: to be baffled by a machine or a domestic worker or an idea is the badge of membership in this civilized and humane minority.

Tone and attitude, the composition textbooks

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tell, commingle and in complex ways reinforce each other. But what can determine both is topic. Here not E.B. White but Harold Ross had the whip hand. Ross was determined that his magazine, which provided serious criticism of the arts, would not get serious about politics. What he termed "sectarian" opinions were *verboten*; taking political sides and espousing political causes were strictly outlawed. The *New Yorker* may have been the only journal of its day not to touch on the subject of Sacco and Vanzetti. E.B. White was the man who would change all that.

Not that there is any compelling reason to believe that White was burning to write about politics. He was not a very political animal. As he had little interest in the main currents of avant-garde art in his day, neither was he at all interested in radical politics. He was a great deal less concerned with Trotsky's state of permanent revolution than with his own state of permanent nostalgia. He would write about the incursions of advertising into modern life, or about the spread of commercialism into places where he felt it had no place, or about the comic pretensions of science to make daily life better, or about the hopeless complexity of urban living—about, in short, the little nuisances set in the path of mankind. The big "think piece," as the boys in journalism used to call it, was not the specialty at his house.

In the early years at the *New Yorker* Harold Ross hired a number of managing editors who were charged with bringing order to the natural chaos of a weekly magazine; these men, would-be saviors, were known among the staff as Ross's newest Jesuses. But E.B. White, in Harold Ross's eyes, was the father and the holy ghost. White seemed to come through for Ross as no other writer did; his were among the few contributions to the magazine that Ross did not devastate with marginal queries. It was White who persuaded Ross to run James Thurber's drawings; it was White who rewrote large sections of "Talk of the Town"; it was White who had the perfect feel for "Notes and Comment." White was reliable on deadlines, White had good taste, White's own prose was Ross's ideal of good prose made flesh.

E.B. White and Harold Ross looked to have one of those perfect editorial partnerships. White did not interfere with Ross's need for control, but, when he felt the need to do so, he was able gently to guide him; Ross gave White the latitude and freedom he seemed to require. If White greatly aided Ross, Ross, in bringing the *New Yorker* into being, was the making of White. "I discovered a long time ago that writing of the small things of the day, the trivial matters of the heart, the inconsequential but near things of this living," White wrote to one of his brothers in 1929, "was the only kind of creative work which I could accomplish with any sincerity or grace. . . . Not till the *New Yorker* came along did I ever find any means of expressing those impertinences and irrelevancies." So there you have it: Ross needed White, White required Ross. "Symbiosis," as S.J. Perelman might have put it, "pleased to meetcha."

Harold Ross's devotion to the *New Yorker*, the child of his brain, was complete; E.B. White's was merely enormous. The artist in White could not quite obliterate himself for the larger purposes of the corporate effort. A poet, the Russian proverb ought perhaps to read, always desires to be in business for himself. Perfect *New Yorker* editorialist though he might have been, White found himself struggling under the limitations of the form. "It is almost impossible to write anything decent using the editorial 'we,' unless you are the Dionne family," White wrote to his friend Gus Lobrano. Nor was he keen on the anonymity of the editorialist; at one point he asked Ross to allow him to sign his name to the "Notes and Comment" editorials, but Ross, who was against even printing a masthead in his magazine, refused.

The artist, with this artist's ample ambitions, began to stir in E.B. White. He preferred not to be called a humorist. He grew frustrated with his editorials; "my weekly sermon for the *New Yorker*," he began to call them. To exacerbate matters, Ralph Ingersoll, one of Harold Ross's former Jesuses, who now worked for *Fortune*, published a long article about the *New Yorker* in *Fortune*'s August 1934 issue; in it he scored the *New Yorker*, which had flourished through the depression, for ignoring the great economic and political issues of its time, and he cited in particular White's "gossamer writing" and editorials "so carefully swathed in whimsy" that they could not possibly affront anyone. This rankled. To the frustration of White's job was now added what he began to believe was the pointlessness of it.

By the mid-1930's E.B. White's fame, though more than intramural, was not yet anything like national in the way it was one day to become. He had published a collection of his *New Yorker* pieces, along with a few volumes of light verse and a collaboration with James Thurber entitled *Is Sex Necessary?* Around New York he was thought of as a pro—a man of modest but real talents who could get the job done. Such must have been the view behind Christopher Morley's offer to White, in 1936, of the editorship of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, which he turned down. Earlier the publisher of the *New Yorker*, Raoul Fleischmann, badly on the outs with Harold Ross, had offered the co-editorship of the magazine to E.B. and Katharine White, but they were not interested in it. Editorial power was never really what interested White.

Art now began to be. In the summer of 1937, at the age of thirty-eight, E.B. White awarded himself a year's sabbatical. *Time* magazine, noting his departure from the *New Yorker*, remarked that he was giving "himself time to think about progress and politics, whether to get out of their

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jumpy way or try to catch up with them." But *Time* was mistaken. White had taken leave to devote himself to a lengthy writing project. A bad idea whose time never came, this project was to be a long autobiographical poem, but White was able to make no headway with it, which redoubled his frustration. "I have made an unholy mess out of this 'year off' business," he wrote to Thurber. He spoke of envying those people who could write without being lashed to deadlines. Never quite comfortable in Manhattan, he now moved permanently to his farm in North Brooklin, Maine. He yearned to make something of his life; he yearned to be more than a mere journalist; he yearned—though he never used the word—for significance.

Although E.B. White continued to do various editorial chores for the *New Yorker* and would go on writing for it until the last few years of his life, in 1938 he made what appeared to be a break when he signed on to contribute a monthly essay of 2,500 words to *Harper's*. Appearing under the rubric "One Man's Meat," fifty-five such essays were published in *Harper's* from 1938 through 1943. Nearly the entire time White was writing for *Harper's*, Harold Ross kept a full-court press of attention on him, making him various counteroffers. (All the while Katharine White continued to work as one of the principal editors of the *New Yorker* and White himself kept an office there.) Still, to make even this partial break with the magazine took a certain amount of courage. The *New Yorker* is one of those publishing institutions—the New York *Times* is another—that looms much larger than the people who work for it, and for people who cut loose from them—in recent years one thinks of Richard Harris at the *New Yorker* and John Leonard at the *Times*—the tendency is to lose stature and to lose it fast. A much smaller number of people gain in stature, and E.B. White was one of them.

The break, less than complete though it was, could not have been all that easy for White, even if he was eager to put an end, as he said, to "his long apprenticeship in the weekly gaiety field." Well before Heisenberg discovered it, uncertainty was a principle for E.B. White, who felt himself not only something of a lightweight but a sad failure as well. When, in 1938, he wrote a letter of general self-deflation to James Thurber, putting himself down for his own insignificance, Thurber responded that, in the present tumultuous age, the need for humor was all the greater, and that White ought not to be ashamed of providing some of it. To Thurber, to give oneself over to a political age, as so many other writers had done, seemed a great mistake:

> It is the easiest thing in the world nowadays to become so socially conscious, so Spanish war stricken, that all sense of balance and values goes out of a person. Not long ago in Paris Lillian Hellman told me that she would give up writing if she could ameliorate the condition of the world, or of only a few people in it. Hemingway is probably on the same path, and a drove of writers are following along, screaming and sweating and looking pretty strange and futile. This is one of the greatest menaces there is; people with intelligence deciding that the point is to become grimly gray and intense and unhappy and tiresome because the world and many of its people are in a bad way. It's a form of egotism, a supreme form.... How can these bastards hope to get hold of what's the matter with the world and do anything about it when they haven't the slightest idea that something just as bad and unnatural has happened to them?

Yet White could not quite take his friend Thurber's advice. To the gloominess of the times—the civil war in Spain, the ascendancy of Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy, the entry of the United States into World War II—White joined his own gloominess of temperament. When he became a full-blown essayist, at least partially free from "the gaiety field," the "I" who emerged from the "we" of the editorialist was more melancholic, dark, and depressed than most of E.B. White's earlier readers would have been likely to suppose.

During his four-and-a-half-year stint at *Harper's*, E.B. White lived full-time on his farm in Maine. Life in the country in fact furnished a goodly portion of the subject matter of many of his *Harper's* essays. These essays, we know from White's correspondence, did not come easily. "A journalist," Karl Kraus remarked, "is someone who, given time, writes worse." So it was for White, who found writing a monthly piece more painful than performing on his old weekly deadline at the *New Yorker*. After his first few *Harper's* essays, his "monthly encyclical" as he called them, White wrote to Morris Bishop that "I sound like Thomas Mann on the Concord and Merrimac." That is very amusing, and not without a measure of accuracy. Perhaps, though, it would be more accurate to say that E.B. White's essays sounded like Thoreau with hay fever and Norman Rockwell with a migraine.

"I TRUST," said a friend to White when he left Manhattan to live in Maine, "that you will spare the reading public your little adventures in contentment." He need not have worried. Anywhere you go, an old saying has it, there you are! While life in Maine for White was less anxious than life in New York—about which he had written a famous essay—he was still able to discover the cloud in every silver lining. Read cumulatively, the *Harper's* essays (brought together in a book entitled *One Man's Meat*) are dark indeed. There is the self-debasement—in one of the essays White describes himself as "a middle-age hack"—that comes rather easily to a writer who elsewhere notes "the enormously important discovery that the world would pay a man for setting

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down a simple, legible account of his own misfortunes." There is the endless nostalgia, which causes White to be, rather predictably, against automobiles but, rather less predictably, also against the dismantling of the Sixth Avenue Elevated. Then there are the bleak little touches: a school bus is "as punctual as death"; a hen house is taken over by "contagious hysteria and fear"; "faces desperate in the rain"; "the fierce bewildering night"; and more, much more, including, in June 1941, an imagination of doomsday, or, as White prefers to call it, "doomsmoment":

> I think when the end of the world comes the sky will be its old blue self, with white cumulus clouds drifting along. You will be looking out of a window, say, at a tree; and then after a bit the tree won't be there any more, and the looking won't be there any more, only the window will be there, in memory—the thing through which the looking has been done. I can see God, walking through the garden and noticing that the world is done for, reach down and pick it up and put it on His compost pile. It ought to make a fine ferment.

White seemed to have a positive taste for the apocalypse. In a story entitled "The Day They Did It," he took on the subject of the end of the world in a science-fiction fantasy. In "Notes and Comment" he wrote editorials about the fear of living in big cities during the atomic age. This fear of the end of the world, as we shall see, dovetails snugly with one of E.B. White's chief political ideas, that of world government, but it also is allied to his general gloom. As *One Man's Meat* makes evident, mankind made White edgy; men, through confusion, ambition, willfulness, were primarily great botchers, making the simple complex, the useful otiose, the beautiful ugly. White found the natural world not only more thrilling than the human one but less frightening as well. His essays form something like an extended commentary on Bishop Heber's quatrain about the isle of Ceylon, where "every prospect pleases/ And only man is vile."

"Life," wrote White to Thurber, "is just about as alarming as it ever was, it seems to me." Life seemed to E.B. White almost perpetually alarming. He was very tightly strung. In 1943, his biographer informs us, without dwelling on the subject, he was under the care of a new doctor, "who had prescribed strychnine to treat his symtoms of depression." In his *Letters** White reports recovering from a "nervous crack-up" he had undergone in the summer of 1943. The following year he writes to his brother that he has decided to go to a doctor "about my head, as there seems to be a kite caught in the branches somewhere." In another letter to his brother he speaks of having "mice in the subconscious" and announces that "the whole key to the neurotic life is simple," though he does not say what the key is.

Nor does Scott Elledge, White's biographer, specify what, precisely, was the matter with White, or what constituted his cure, if cured he was, for nervous breakdowns haunted him throughout his life. Elledge wrote his biography while White was still alive, and perhaps good manners stood in the way of probing his subject on this delicate point. I am more than a little hesitant to bring it up myself, lest it be thought that I am using E.B. White's mental problems against him; I do so only because it seems necessary in the effort to establish what kind of writer E.B. White was and why he was of this kind and no other.

WHITE himself did not try to hide his mental fragility. Two pieces in his collection of 1954, *The Second Tree from the Corner*, deal directly with breakdown and madness. In a much reprinted sketch entitled "The Door," a narrator is comparing his own condition to that of rats who have been sent through mazes and put through other experiments. In a state of high agitation, the narrator remarks, ". . . I am confronted by a problem that is incapable of solution . . . and that is what madness is, and things seeming different from what they are." Later he will add, ". . . for although my heart has followed all my days something I cannot name, I am tired of the jumping and I do not know which way to go, Madam, and I am not even sure that I am tired beyond the endurance of man (rat, if you will) and have taken leave of sanity."

In a vignette entitled "The Second Tree from the Corner," one Mr. Trexler visits his psychiatrist late in the afternoons. He suffers from what he terms "the dullest set of neurotic symptoms in the world"; these include "the dizziness in the streets, the constricting pain in the back of the neck, the apprehensions, the tightness of the scalp, the inability to concentrate, the despondency and the melancholy times, the feeling of pressure and tension, the anger at not being able to work, the anxiety over work not done, the gas on the stomach." The visits to the psychiatrist avail him nought. The psychiatrist at one point asks Trexler what he wants from life. Trexler cannot say, but leaving the psychiatrist's office, he realizes that what he wants is "deep, formless, enduring, and impossible of fulfillment, and that it made men sick. . . . what he wanted was at once great and microscopic, and that although it borrowed from the nature of large deeds and of youthful love and of old songs and early intimations, it was not any one of these things, and that it had not been isolated or pinned down, and that a man who attempted to define it in the privacy of a doctor's office would fall flat on his face." At this, White continues,

> Trexler felt invigorated. Suddenly his sickness seemed health, his dizziness stability. A small

* Collected and edited by Dorothy Lobrano Gruth, Harper & Row (1970).

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> tree, rising between him and the light, stood there saturated with the evening, each gilt-edged leaf perfectly drunk with excellence and delicacy. Trexler's spine registered an ever so slight tremor as it picked up this natural disturbance in the lovely scene. "I want the second tree from the corner, just as it stands," he said, answering an imaginary question from an imaginary physician. And he felt a slow pride in realizing what he wanted none could bestow, and that what he had none could take away. He felt content to be sick, unembarrassed at being afraid; and in the jungle of his fear he glimpsed (as he had so often glimpsed them before) the flashy tail feathers of the bird courage.

What E.B. White wanted, what I believe the second tree from the corner represented for him, was art—more specifically, he wanted, out of his vulnerability, to create something with the "excellence and delicacy" of true art.

In 1943 E.B. White returned to the *New Yorker*, whose ranks had been much thinned by World War II. In his letter of resignation to *Harper's*, he wrote to Frederick Lewis Allen, then that magazine's editor, that he "felt a peculiar disappointment, almost a defeat" in his work there; and he later added that "I want to write when and if I feel like it." Yet, however great White's personal sense of failure as an essayist at *Harper's*, there is no doubt that his stint there was the making of him.

Owing to a strong attack he had written for *Harper's* on Anne Morrow Lindbergh's *The Wave of the Future*, a book arguing the isolationist case against America's entry into World War II, and other pieces he had written against fascism and on behalf of democracy, White had become something of a spokesman for what in bygone days used to be called "the American way of life." (As an opponent of fascism, White, it is worth noting, early condemned the Nazis' savage treatment of Jews in Germany.) Evidence of his new and greatly enhanced reputation is that, in 1941 Archibald MacLeish, the director of the government Office of Facts and Figures, asked White to join Max Lerner, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Malcolm Cowley in collaborating on a propaganda pamphlet on "The Four Freedoms"; he, White, was to write on freedom of speech and then to serve as rewrite man for the entire project. He was offered—and refused—a judgeship at the Book-of-the-Month Club. Around this time Irwin Edman asserted of White's *Harper's* essays that they contained "the poetry of observation and the philosophy of shrewd, usually gentle, sometimes biting moral insight." From such items are the altars of middlebrow gurus constructed.

How seriously did E.B. White take himself as a spokesman, guru, thinker? Elledge acknowledges that White "seldom commanded the patience and the intellectual staying-power needed for arguments involving a knowledge of history and the formulation of complex ideas." From his own letters one gets a sense that White was aware of his own intellectual indigence. On the dust jacket of *The Wild Flag*, his book of editorials on world government, White himself must have written: "Mr. White does not regard himself as a Thinker and says he feels ill-at-ease writing editorials on massive themes. He regards himself as a clown of average ability whose signals got crossed and who found himself out on the wire with the Wallendas." Yet though he kept no bees on his farm, E.B. White would from time to time get a bee in his bonnet, and then his confidence in his powers of intellect could be very great. A case in point is, precisely, world government—a subject that he took up in the late 1930's and retained an interest in to the end of his days.

World government—or world federation, as it was sometimes called—was an aspiration, a belief, a panacea for ending warfare among nations by introducing not international but supranational law into the affairs of nations. It made a broad appeal to humanity at large over and against narrow nationalism; it viewed sovereignty, as White once put it, as "a dead cat." It held out the hope for a world without enemies, which was an alluring hope indeed after World War II had introduced atomic weapons. In the late 1940's and early 1950's, world government had wide currency; among its adherents were Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer Adler; many a political theorist lost many a weekend designing one or another world constitution. World government, in short, was an idea with everything to commend it and only reality and human nature to oppose it.

Although White wrote about world government in some of his *Harper's* essays, it was in the "Notes and Comment" section of the *New Yorker* that he really chopped away at this particular teakettle. Elledge maintains that, after White's return to the *New Yorker*, "beginning with the issue of April 10, 1943, and continuing for the next four years, nearly one-third of White's weekly 'Notes and Comment' included at least one paragraph on the subject [of world government]." It is a tribute to Harold Ross's regard for White that he allowed him to editorialize so relentlessly on a subject that he, Ross, was not at all interested in. White's editorials did nothing, of course, to bring world government any closer to realization—neither, after all, has the United Nations—but they did have the effect of opening the *New Yorker*'s pages to issues of social and political significance; they cleared the way for the magazine's political phase, which it has never left, so that today, in its "Notes and Comment" section, one can be almost certain of finding a weekly sermon on Nicaragua, or Star Wars, or fresh malfeasance on the part of the CIA.

Not that E.B. White was anywhere near so left-wing as the current tendency of the *New Yorker*, the magazine of Jonathan Schell and Jacobo Tim-

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erman and Richard J. Barnet. White's politics were a very great muddle, if that term does not give them credit for more coherence than they actually contained. White was, for example, against economic controls yet also against the profit system. He was, as we have seen, very much for world government yet against disarmament—on the grounds that, until such time as we had world government, we would all need our weapons. (White never underestimated the ambition of the Soviet Union for world domination.) He was a civil libertarian, yet thought the country "babied" its labor unions. He worried (in print) endlessly about the future, yet seemed only to love the past. He claimed not to have understood the meaning of life, yet was full of advice for the living. E.B. White was a pessimistic utopian, a despairing optimist, a sour idealist, a man reputed to be a humanitarian who, when one got right down to it, was made edgy by most human beings.

These contradictions were not always apparent in E.B. White's writing, and for at least two reasons. The first is that, as an essayist, he was not a writer one was likely to read *en bloc*, and so one took him piece by piece and could not be expected to discover his inconsistencies. (It may well be that he himself never discovered them.) The second reason is his prose, which was clear, often shyly eloquent, and immensely seductive. All writers seek to seduce their readers, with reason or charm or brilliance, or a combination of the three. White did it mostly on charm, but charm of a special kind: self-derogating, homey, sensitive. He was the ostensibly bashful boy who sets out to win the hand of the beauty queen.

White wrote in what, technically, is known as the plain style. His specialty was the declarative sentence: subject, predicate, direct object, indirect object, in that order. His sentences contained few subordinate clauses, inversions, semicolons, or dashes. His vocabulary was also plain: no foreign words, no arcane words, almost no abstract words, only occasionally a slang word like "dippy" or "loopy" that has its own charm. For the most part, an E.B. White essay is composed of plain words arrayed in plain syntax forming plain declarative sentences, one after another, back to back, on and on. In a prefatory note to his essay on William Strunk, the original author of *The Elements of Style*, White, after citing his uneasiness about "posing as an expert on rhetoric," said, "the truth is I write by ear, always with difficulty and seldom with any exact notion of what is taking place under the hood." That is the characteristic E.B. White tone.

White did have a fine ear for prose cadence. He also knew that the best-made sentences are those that have a small surprise waiting at their close. "In the still air," he wrote, describing a war-bond rally, "under the hard sun, gleamed the flags and the banners and the drum majorette's knees." Or, again, this time describing that moment in high summer when one realizes that autumn will soon follow: "The tides run in and out, clams blow tiny jets of seawater up through the mud, a white line of fog hangs around the outer islands, days tumble along in cool blue succession, and I hate the word September." This last sentence is perhaps, in Harold Ross's term, "writer conscious"—by which Ross meant artificial in the way that only an exhibitionist writer can be—but there is no denying White's descriptive powers. He was quite wonderful at describing buildings at dusk, snow in the bright sun, a lake in the rain.

Even with the plain style, variations exist. George Orwell used the plain style to convey that he, a man of plain words, could not be conned by fancy or false words. Behind E.B. White's plain style is the quiet but firm insistence that White was an unpretentious and sensitive man. One of the chief services performed by writers who project their own sensitivity—along with E.B. White, E.M. Forster and J.D. Salinger are two other such writers—is that (as I remarked earlier about the *New Yorker* in general) they make their readers feel that they, too, are sensitive. Yet sensitivity can easily slide into sentimentality. Often it did in the work of White, who, in his editorial for the *New Yorker* on the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt could invoke the guns fired at the dead President's grave and "Fala's sharp answering bark," or could write at the death of John F. Kennedy: "It can be said of him, as of few men in a like position, that he did not fear the weather, and did not trim his sails, but instead challenged the wind itself, to improve its direction and to cause it to blow more softly and more kindly over the world and its people." How sonorous, how beautiful, how not especially true!

Was E.B. White a great essayist? I, for one, think he was at his best when he was not preaching—when he set the teakettle aside and laid down his ax. But he was preaching a good deal of the time. Although he is now generally regarded as a cheery American writer—recall the *New Yorker* obituary's reference to "his inexplicably sunny inclinations"—White was by nature gloomy and at his most moving when he gave way to his fear and sadness. To my mind easily his most beautiful essay is "Once More to the Lake," which is about his return in 1941, along with his eleven-year-old son, to the lake in Maine where White's own father used to take him and his family beginning in 1904. It is an essay that shimmers like a perfect poem; everything in it clicks.

In the essay White recalls the lake he once knew and now sees again through the eyes of his young son, who does everything at the lake that he did as a boy more than thirty years earlier:

> I began to sustain the illusion that he was I, and therefore, by simple transposition, that I was my father. This sensation persisted, kept

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> cropping up all the time we were there. It was not an entirely new feeling, but in this setting it grew much stronger. I seemed to be living a dual existence. I would be in the middle of some simple act, I would be picking up a bait box or laying down a table fork, or I would be saying something, and suddenly it would be not I but my father who was saying the words or making the gesture. It gave me a creepy feeling.

"Once More to the Lake" is about generation, about birth and rebirth and death. White was fascinated by generation and haunted by death. Both obsessions come through brilliantly in this essay, where through his own son he relives his father's life and previews his own death. In the essay's closing paragraph, his son, after a rain shower, wrings out his bathing suit before going in for an afternoon swim. White writes: "Languidly, and with no thought of going in, I watched him, his hard little body, skinny and bare, saw him wince slightly as he pulled up around his vitals the small, soggy, icy garment. As he buckled the swollen belt, suddenly my groin felt the chill of death." This essay is dazzling and devastating, art of a heightened kind that an essayist is rarely privileged to achieve.

One does not usually think of E.B. White as a man writing out of his obsessions, yet obsessional he was, and perhaps nowhere more so than in his books for children: *Stuart Little*, *Charlotte's Web*, *The Trumpet of the Swan*. Children adore these books, and yet one wonders what they make of them. Children love living things and have their own fascination with the animal world—a love and fascination which White, clearly, shared. Yet children have this advantage over adults: they are permitted to love things they do not understand. But coming to these books as an adult, and loaded down with knowledge of their author's life, with its longings and fears, one cannot avoid reading them as fables about E.B. White's own life.

I hope I may be allowed to forgo a full-dress exegesis comparing E.B. White's life with that of the mouse Stuart, the pig Wilbur, and the swan Louis. But this much does require saying: all three are characters in need of rescue. Stuart is a mouse born to human parents who finds city life among human beings hazardous and indeed terrifying; Wilbur is a pig being fatted for slaughter; Louis is a trumpeter swan who is born mute and hence cut off from all communication. In these books Stuart is impelled on a quest after a bird who is very much like a muse; Wilbur is saved by a spider named Charlotte who can write; and Louis learns to play the trumpet, a talent which allows him to find a mate and also earn enough money to redeem the reputation of his father, who broke into a music store to attain the trumpet through which Louis learned to speak and eventually to live a fairly normal life.

I hope, again, that I do not betray the dreariness of my symbol-minded literary education when I suggest that Stuart's quest for the bird Margalo mirrors White's own quest in departing New York and journalism for art (at one point in the story Stuart is given charge of a class, and the lesson he teaches it is on the need for something suspiciously like world government); and that, at the close of *Charlotte's Web*, when Wilbur remarks of the spider who saved him that "It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer," White has in mind his wife, who was the mainstay of his always shaky life; and that Louis's attempt to make good his father's theft at the music store refers to the charges of fraud brought against White's own father at the Horace Waters musical instrument firm.

In a letter, E.B. White reported that when Edmund Wilson, his colleague at the *New Yorker*, read *Stuart Little*, he announced to White: "I read that book of yours. I found the first page quite amusing, about the mouse, you know. But I was disappointed that you didn't develop the theme more in the manner of Kafka." But in fact White did develop his books for children in the manner of Kafka, if in a somewhat enfeebled and oddly American way; these books are Kafkaesque but with the American twist that they are Kafka with happy endings, and in their own manner they fulfill the prescription of William Dean Howells, who once remarked that what the American public wanted "was a tragedy with a happy ending."

A tragedy with a putatively happy ending might well stand in as a description of E.B. White's own life and career. His was a life led in fear—"Everything scared me in those days," he wrote in an essay about his apprenticeship as a reporter in Seattle, "and still does"—and on the rim of nervous breakdown. His was a career that strained after significance; but despite all the honors he won, he himself was never quite convinced he had achieved it. The obituarists and eulogists (they were one and the same) who wrote about him at his death both praised and buried him, obscuring, in their exaltation of him as "a precious natural resource" and a man of "inexplicably sunny inclinations," both the man he was and the writer he wished to be. To be a writer vastly overrated and mostly misunderstood—this, for now, will have to pass for a happy ending.

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Indian Art—and Ours

James Gardner

WHEN in 1526 he finally turned to assess the country he had just conquered, Babur, the prodigious founder of the Mughal dynasty, was not impressed. "Hindustan," he complained, "is a country that has few pleasures to recommend it. The people are not handsome. They have no genius, no comprehension of mind, no politeness of manner, no kindness of fellow feeling, no ingenuity or mechanical invention in planning or executing their handicraft works, no skill or knowledge in design or architecture. . . ."

Three centuries later, it was upon similar grounds that T. B. Macaulay, in his tract on Indian education, could justify to the Houses of Commons and of Lords the momentous decision to engraft upon an entire culture the features of his own civilization. "Who could deny," Macaulay asked, "that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole literature of India and Arabia?" Further on in the same work he found occasion to fulminate against Indian "medical doctrines, which would disgrace an English Farrier—Astronomy, which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school—History, abounding with kings thirty feet high, and reigns thirty thousand years long—and Geography, made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter."

Yet in the early part of the present century, less than a hundred years after Macaulay, the mind and conscience of Europe suddenly and mysteriously changed. No longer did people believe, with Ruskin, that Indian art was "the archetype of bad art of all the earth." Inspired, rather, by its beauty, the critic Roger Fry was moved in 1910 to declare that "we can no longer hide behind the Elgin Marbles and refuse to look; we have no longer any system of aesthetics which can rule out, a priori, even the most fantastic and unreal artistic forms. They must be judged in themselves and by their own artistic standards." The French novelist and critic Romain Rolland went even farther. "Let us climb back to the high plains of Asia!" he declared, likening the European in India to Alaric in Rome, a rude and bloodthirsty barbarian in a culture vastly superior to his own.

Nowadays, everybody seems to love India—its food, its costumes, and its exotic art. This interest is reflected in the recently published *The Sculpture of India, 3000 B.C.-1300 A.D.* by Pramod Chandra, which served as the catalogue for a show last summer at the National Gallery in Washington, and it was reflected even more emphatically in the exhibition, "India! Art and Culture 1300-1900," which ran at the Metropolitan Museum in New York from September 1985 to this past January. To judge by the crowds that flocked to see it, this latter exhibition gave them exactly what they wanted, short of wafting through the galleries the scent of curry and the bourdon drone of the sitar.

Although the exhibition at the Metropolitan was no doubt intended, in its ebullient and large-hearted way, to establish some sense of cultural and artistic universals, in reality it merely accentuated the exotic otherness of the works it displayed. The catalogue, massive and almost completely useless, features bright, full-colored illustrations, irrelevant asides about the love affairs and the opium habits of the Great Mughals, and exuberant efforts to play up any trace of the mysterious that it could catch hold of. Thus, in speaking of an appealing but unexceptional flower painting, the curator, Stuart Cary Welch, wrote: "Beneath insects and blossoms, an aspiring bud aims skyward, resembling a helium balloon tugging at its cord. . . . [The artist's] study has overshot—so magnified and lofty that it carries us above the earth." This sort of thing was registered also in the layout of the exhibition, with its interplay of sharp highlights emerging from deep shadow, the presence of a massive silk and velvet tent, and the profusion of gleaming jewels, all of which seemed more appropriate to the Metropolitan Opera than to the Metropolitan Museum.

The educational value of the show was virtually nonexistent, and for much less money the Metropolitan could have mounted a far worthier exhibition. Indeed, critical opinion generally conceded that the show was a vulgar crowd-pleaser. This outrage, however, seems excessive. Viewers who had been lured to the museum only after considerable coaxing of this kind would certainly have come away with an enhanced sense of wonder, and would be happier for the experience. This is not everything that might be asked from a community-minded museum, but it is something.

JAMES GARDNER's articles in COMMENTARY include "Graffiti & Other Art Forms" (August 1985) and "Is Caravaggio Our Contemporary?" (June 1985).

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What was most unsatisfactory about the Metropolitan exhibition lay elsewhere, in its blithe avoidance of essential questions concerning the definition of cultures in general, and Indian culture in particular. Probably no historical undertaking is more taxing than the attempt to fix the precise dimensions of a culture and to distinguish it from other cultures, and this task is all the greater when it comes to the age-old division between East and West. The moment we try to define the division precisely, we must become exasperated by the fact that our definition can never be wholly adequate to reality. The very enterprise is charged with political and ideological overtones of the most dangerous kind. Yet the notion of such a division remains a useful instrument of thought, and, however inexact, it deserves to be retained.

India, though only a part of the larger concept of the East, is itself almost as elusive. For the most decisive moment in Indian history was the subjugation of the Dravidian people around 1500 B.C.E. by the newly arrived Aryan invaders, a group that would also settle in the West and whose language, known as Proto-Indo-European, is the common ancestor of Sanskrit and Persian as well as of almost every occidental language from those of Homer and Virgil to Portuguese, Gaelic, and English. Conversely, so many Western influences, Greek, Roman, Islamic, and British, have left their mark upon India, and the country itself has inspired so many other nations of the East, that to determine the boundaries of Indian culture without pedantic hair-splitting or insubstantial generality is well-nigh impossible.

CAN one then speak of the Indianness of Indian art, in the way in which the late Sir Nikolaus Pevsner could speak of the Englishness of English art? Pevsner himself recognized the impossibility of distilling from the mass of individual artifacts created by the British people a single feature or conjunction of features that was always present, and that was never present in the art of other nations. But he also understood that the value of any critical or art-historical statement resided not in its indisputability but rather in the contribution it made to an enhanced aesthetic and intellectual understanding. A benign inexactitude must similarly be granted in any search for the distinctive components of Indian art and culture.

At least one element of Indian culture makes it very different from that of England. The latter nation had a way of transforming into its own terms each of the influences it received, whether that of Norman architecture, rococo decoration, or Cubism. Indian art, however, is marked by a massive divide. During its first two millennia, up until the Delhi Sultanate (from 1298), India had a robust and beautiful tradition of its own, one which influenced many other nations and could transform foreign styles into indigenous terms. But after the arrival of the Muslims—which is unfortunately the point where the Metropolitan show began—not only did India prove unable to assimilate the art of a culture that it could no longer resist, but the entire spirit of Indian art changed entirely into that of its conquerors.

To put it another way, the art of pre-Islamic India is closer, both in form and attitude, to the art of classical Greece than it is to the art of Islamic India. Whereas the art of pre-Islamic India is characterized in general (though subject to many qualifications) by the suppression of individual details in the interest of a fluently continuous and indivisible whole, Indian art after the arrival of the Muslims allows a profusion of individual details to disrupt and ultimately to negate the wholeness for which earlier artists had striven.

In contrast to Egypt, classical Greece, and Renaissance Florence, which managed to attain excellence in a variety of media—painting, sculpture, and architecture—but like Holland in the 17th century, which achieved immortal results in painting alone, the artistic greatness of India resided from earliest times almost exclusively in a genius for sculpture. Indian architecture is really unworthy of the name, being in effect merely a collection of abstract sculpture to which is appended smaller, figurative sculpture; and with the exception of such beautiful work as is found in the cave paintings of Ajanta, dating from the 5th century, most of the painting done in India is essentially Arabic.

Within the province of sculptured stone and cast bronze, however, it is difficult to name any nation that has achieved greatness so instinctively. As with those waves of vital force in which Indian philosophy has always conceived of the generations of human life, the rich and lascivious forms carved onto the living rock of Mahabalipuram or set into the terraced elevations of the temples of Madurai and Tanjore seem to flow from the stone through a natural, almost vegetable, exudation. At the very inception of their civilization, long before the Aryan invasion, the people of India manifested to a miraculous degree this almost freakish aptitude for sculpture, as is evident in two torsos found in Harappa (dating from the mid-3rd millennium B.C.E.), one of which Chandra discusses in *The Sculpture of India*. These are of a stunning beauty and naturalism; the skill with which the prominences and depressions of the body have been conveyed, with a full sense of the musculature beneath the flesh, and of the internal organs beneath the musculature, is extraordinary. The creators of these works clearly would have had little to learn either from the later sculptors of Gandharan or Gupta India, or from the masters of classical Greece.

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The Harappan statues are in the highest degree naturalistic, as though it were their artists' principal aim to hold a living organism magically and eternally in suspension, without dispelling the all-important sense of Promethean heat. This naturalism is not entirely at odds with the predominating features of later Indian culture, and there exists a continuum between it and the Mauryan and post-Mauryan sculpture that emerges in the 4th century B.C.E. Benjamin Rowland, in *The Art and Architecture of India*, asserts that the Aryan invaders were inclined to mix freely with and to adopt the artistic terms of the Dravidians whom they conquered. "Long before 500 B.C.E.," he writes, "the culture of India was a mixture of Indian and Dravidian elements." Unfortunately this continuum can be demonstrated only tentatively, because, with the exception of certain scattered and inconsiderable remains in terra cotta, very few traces of visual art remain from about the first thousand years after the Aryan invasion of India.

When finally we reemerge from this period, in the 4th century B.C.E., the predominating influence is neither Dravidian nor Aryan but rather that of the Achaemenid dynasty in Persia. One beautiful statue in the Washington show, of a goddess holding a fly whisk, gracefully applies this imported Persian style to the native motif of the Yakshi, or freestanding female figure. Another especially fine example of this influence is to be found in the depiction of four lions, back to back, forming the part of a single column, in the Sarnath Site Museum. Fully in keeping with the art of the Persian capital of Persepolis, the lions sit extremely and pompously erect, looking completely stuffed. These works serve almost as a test of how much one really loves sculpture, for their excellence, so different from that of "typically" Indian art, consists in the imparting of a prickly and pedantic precision to each carefully combed curl of the mane and each lotiform incision at the base. But then at the base of the capital there is a horse, springing with an electricity directly at odds with this Persepolitan tradition. Rowland considers both the horse and the lions to betray completely un-Indian tastes, yet the case might be made that there is more of the Indianness of Indian art in the figure of that horse than in anything else of this period, something which will pervade all sculpture in India up until the Muslim hegemony.

This element is best described as a naturalism that is always tending toward schematism, and a schematism that is forever leaning toward naturalism. It is true that such a dualism is often enough to be seen elsewhere, in Egypt, in Sumer, in medieval France, and so on, yet only in India does it constitute the essential terms in which sculptural projects are consistently played out. For a millennium and a half, the art of India, as well as such Oriental art as is inspired by the Indian, remains faithfully within these terms.

The form that the Indian compromise takes is one in which, through the subtleties of carving, individual anatomical parts melt into one another in a serene, boneless fleshiness. As so often happens in Indian art, it was necessary for a variety of styles to come together to evolve the types that would ultimately predominate. The poised and erect Buddhas, subsequently to be found throughout Asia, may have derived ultimately from the autochthonous tradition of the freestanding Yakshi, but certainly a major source of inspiration was the Greco-Roman sculpture that began to appear in the North during the Gandharan period in the early years of the Christian era. At this point the two traditions link up and bring about in art a relationship of consanguinity similar to that which already existed in language. In architecture a new order, known as Indo-Corinthian, comes into being; in bronze or stone, the figures take on the attitude of Apollo or Zeus, and the face of the Buddha is infused with a serenity that is nevertheless compatible, in its finely striated features, with the chiseled modeling of the Venus of Milos.

Yet the spirituality of these works is radically at variance with anything known to the statuary of classical antiquity. In Greece, whether in the idealizations of Phidias or in the realism that sets in with Lysippus and Praxiteles, marble is always distanced from the flesh and blood of the real world. These figures, for all the veracity with which they are sometimes endowed, are never seen in a state of convincing repose, and their eyes are always wide open in eternal wakefulness. Frozen in motion, or frozen in the act of merely standing, they overawe us with their cold sublimity. We are intended to appreciate the beauty of their form and the majesty of their attitude, but I would venture that no one was ever moved by them to feelings of sympathy or community. Not even the fauns and satyrs of the Alexandrian age invite us to enter into their revelries, nor do the gods of Polyclitus gather us into their untroubled calm.

By contrast, the gods of Hinduism and the saints of Buddhism are born of a bronze more malleable, or of rock more porous and breathing than Parian marble. In Indian art, whether in a 2nd-century Bodhisattva from Chandigarh or a 5th-century Buddha from Calcutta, both of which were shown in Washington, we feel that we are in the presence of living creatures, suspended in stone or bronze yet still retaining an undiminished vitality. It is true that the terms of their existence have been dramatically circumscribed, especially in Buddhism, where the creatures depicted are usually in a trancelike state. Yet if the eternally open eyes of classical antiquity do not condescend to acknowledge the viewer, the statuary of India generates such a sense of communion that even

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with eyes closed, the Buddha seems to sense our presence.

That stiffness which is the perennial bugbear of classical statuary is transmuted in Indian art into a force that is only the stronger for the suppression of gestures. Similarly, the perfect roundness and protuberance of the Buddha's belly, presaged in the earliest Harappan sculpture, but too purely rounded for classical art, is here endowed with a thrilling energy, intended by the sculptor to suggest the breathing exercises associated with certain Buddhist sects.

Just as Indian art infuses its static figures with vitality, so is it able, especially in depictions of Hindu subjects, to convey a sense of movement. It does this by positioning arms and legs not in such a way as to refer to the movement depicted but in such a way as to suggest that its creations have an internal power either to move or to abstain from motion. Like the early, Persian-inspired horse mentioned above, the vast sculptural projects of the Gupta period (from the 2nd to the 7th century) and of the so-called Hindu Renaissance (8th century) dance, run, and leap in ecstatic contortions. Whether in the massive and metaphorical depiction of the descent of the Ganges carved onto the rock of the caves of Mahabalipuram, with their whirling angels and their beautifully carved elephants, or in the horses and riders so impressively engraved upon the walls of Srirangam in Trichurapalli, the anonymous sculptors seek to convey a distinctly Indian sense of life on earth and in the heavens as energy and unceasing movement. In all the comparable projects of medieval Europe, as in the archivolts of Chartres and Rheims, there is conveyed an idea of perfect order in which each figure plays its part and has its own assigned role; in Indian art, especially in the parade of creatures in Mahabalipuram, we are presented only with the thorough expanse of forces and movements pullulating out of the source of life in the Ganges.

Most of the works discussed so far are from the North, but it was in the South, where Hinduism retained its original force the longest, that such vibrant movement is to be found in individual, freestanding bronze figures. And it is here that the Metropolitan exhibition began, with two fine representations of Shiva and Parvati from the 15th century. Typically, the figures had no very good reason for being where they were, since the show was otherwise devoted almost entirely to the work of Muslim or Muslim-influenced painting and sculpture rather than to anything of indigenous Indian growth. It is almost as if they had been placed there as a wry reminder of what was missing. What was so pleasing in these works, aside from a skill in the casting of the bronze which would not be seen again in later years, was (to use an evocative phrase that Bernard Berenson applied to 14th-century madonnas) the "singing line" of the contours.

Unfortunately, this purity of sculptural form was not destined to survive the Muslim conquest for very long. Soon the native genius of the Indian craftsmen was diverted to areas for which they were less suited. Although figures of this sort were indeed being produced by local workshops into the 19th century, later examples are entirely lacking in grace of contour or fineness of detailing, and are in fact only pallid imitations of what had once been spontaneous and beautiful.

Perhaps the single area in which the Islamic invaders managed to improve the art of the Indians was architecture. As I noted earlier, the Indians did not have any great gift for imaginative architectural thinking; the beauty they achieved in this field was not the beauty of architecture but rather that of sculpture. Their massive architectural structures, at least those that have survived, were intended not for human habitation, but to house the deities of the faith. Thus they were not required to demonstrate any especially sensible distribution of space, or any economical use of material. The beauty of these works, most emphatically in those baroque phantasms built after the Gupta period, consists entirely in their exteriors. They are in a sense the first abstract sculptures, if sculpture can be defined as the art form that occupies rather than contains space.

Only after the Muslim invasions did a true architectural sense begin to appear in India. And indeed, it is easy to believe that the world has not produced builders with architectural instincts superior to those of the builders of Islam. For one thing, they were absolute masters in the placement and the carving of brick on the surface of a flat wall, equaled in this respect only by the architects of England and Piedmont; in addition they had a fluent and utterly limpid sense of space completely contained, but never intruded upon, by the pristine harmony of architectural forms. These forms were in fact an offshoot of, or a variation on, the language of classical European architecture in its more baroque Syrian incarnations from the first few centuries of the Christian era, and also on the architecture of Byzantium. In the glorious architecture of the Safavid King Shah Abbas, these frail yet enduring structures are so delicately conceived as to seem a cross between a Palladian villa and a Japanese tea chamber.

It was at this point in the history of the art of India that one of the less memorable of the Great Mughals, Shah Jahan, raised to the memory of his wife the Taj Mahal, which together with the city of Fatehpur-Sikri, built by his grandfather Akbar, constitutes one of the architectural wonders of the world. Compared with the extravagant fan vaultings of the Tejpal temple at Mount Abu, or the impressive but useless entablature of the Surya temple at Modhera, these structures are

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models of good sense which continue to inspire admiration even after the allure of their more exotic innovations has worn off.

In all of this it is important to remember that almost from its inception Islamic art obeyed an injunction against the representation of living things. Thus it happened that the Muslim conquerors showed little taste or understanding for those sculptural forms that marked India's almost exclusive proficiency in art, and thus too it happened that the artists of Hinduism and Buddhism were induced, at the height of their creativity, to forsake the area of their genius and to attempt to create beauty in a medium in which they had shown very little interest before. In due course, there did evolve a tradition of miniatures and manuscript illustration which managed to give shape to living things without committing the ultimate transgression, implicit in sculpture, of rendering forms in three dimensions. What is most striking about the transformation that overtook Indian art, however, is the shift not from three dimensions to two but rather from an extremely energetic and vital art to an extremely precise and almost pedantic love of detailing.

There is much that is genuinely beautiful in the resultant Mughal and Rajput miniatures, and this was considerably in evidence at the Metropolitan show. The work is fine and jewel-like, and the colors are always very bright and pretty. And yet, as in the art of comic books, the attraction consists more in the individual patches of color than in the justness of their combination. Furthermore, to a far greater degree than is true of Old Master paintings, the art of the Islamic miniature is easily reduced to a painfully circumscribed limit of compositional possibilities, while the figures set into the compositions always remain in more or less the same state, with their arms or legs variously rearranged.

If the absence of expression in the statuary of Periclean Athens suggests an idealized beauty above the sorrows of this world, the faces of the figures in Islamic miniatures, whether men or women, old or young, are merely blank. One has only to compare these works with the roughly contemporary anonymous miniatures and illuminated manuscripts being produced in France in order to appreciate the disparity in quality.

Ultimately, what redeems many of the manuscript illustrations of Islam is the beauty of the individual details. With an avidity comparable to that of Dürer, some of the finest of the artists represented at the Metropolitan lavished painstaking and rewarding attention upon the mane of a lion, or the hide of a horse, or the striations on the petals of a plant. Also beautiful is the very subtle and sophisticated rendering of volumes, comparable in their way to the volumetric mania of the early Florentine perspectivists. Taken all in all, though, it remains true that the art of India shown at the Metropolitan falls considerably short of what was produced in both the North and the South in earlier periods.

HAVE we, after this brief tour of the exhibitions at the National Gallery and the Metropolitan, come any closer to a definition of what is distinctly Indian about Indian art? Of all civilizations, India would seem to be the hardest to define. To an even higher degree than other great nations, it is a confluence of a vast variety of cultures, often combining so thoroughly as to be inseparable either in thought or in practice. And yet it is still our habit to speak of India comprehensively, suggesting that we know not only what it is in itself but also how it can be contrasted with any other nation in the world.

The Indian aesthetician, Ananda Coomaraswamy, who received a completely Western education, was speaking not only to but also for many Westerners when he announced that "there was a time when Europe and Asia could and did actually understand each other very well. Asia has remained herself; but subsequent to the extroversion of the European consciousness and its preoccupation with surfaces, it has become more and more difficult for European minds to think in terms of unity, and therefore more difficult to understand the Asiatic point of view."

The quality of unity that Coomaraswamy is here invoking is one that many Westerners in this century have professed to find in India. And if by unity one means, in art, something like the naturalism of which I spoke earlier in connection with the sculpture of pre-Islamic India, then indeed they have a point. But in granting this point one must simultaneously resist Coomaraswamy's tendentious and imprecise diagnosis of *Western* culture as based on an "extroversion of consciousness," as if this quality, by which he appears to mean the free play of reason and the rational mind, were somehow an unnatural manifestation. For rationality is but one of the many shapes that protean nature assumes, and it is not necessary for us to be Western supremacists to argue that, as a mode of apprehending reality, it need not bow in any degree to the "Asiatic point of view."

But can we in fact go farther, and argue, on the basis of some dispassionate comparison of human artifacts, for the superiority of our own culture and art? I believe it is possible to do so. It *is* possible to make absolute statements about the aesthetic value of works of art. We have the right, for example, to say to anyone who believes that the *pasticheur* Anton Mengs is a greater painter than Raphael that he simply does not know what he is talking about. Similarly, we have the right to say that if each of two painters creates consistently excellent works, and one of them paints one more painting than the other, then, all else being equal, his must be the greater achievement.

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It is upon such grounds that we can say that the entire achievement of Rajput and Muslim miniatures does not surpass, either in quality or most probably even in number, the illuminations of the Brothers Limbourg and their contemporaries of the early 15th century, together with the artists of the next generation in France. All the architecture ever built in India (as architecture rather than as massive sculpture) does not equal one century of French Gothic. And even the great sculpture of India, throughout its many centuries, is honored by being spoken of as the equal of the sculpture of medieval France—and France is only a small part of our Western civilization, and not necessarily the best.

WESTERN culture has not needed to be told of the value of foreign civilizations. Indeed, to seek wisdom in foreign cultures, emphatically including what Romain Rolland called "the higher plains of Asia," is a distinctly Western attitude, and Western civilization is perhaps the only one ever to be dramatically influenced by cultures to which it has been militarily superior. Others might have taste foisted upon them, as the Indians received the influence of the Muslims, but they have never actually sought it out as Westerners have done. The same impulses that conduce to this attitude have also made Western artists more numerous and more various than the artists of any other culture. Even if we were to concede that as individuals our artists were only the equals of others, and even if we were tactfully to leave aside the achievements of Michelangelo, Rembrandt, and their like, the combination of numbers and accomplishment alone would suffice to make our civilization, taken as a whole, the greatest in human history.

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Why Computers Can't Be Poets

William Barrett

THERE is no royal road to learning, the ancients said; but in our culture, now, all roads seem, in one way or another, to lead to the computer. The transition from mathematical logic to the computer is an easy and natural one. Ludwig Wittgenstein's protest in his last years that mathematical logic had become a bad influence in philosophy was directed against the threat, as he saw it, that reliance on a linguistic mechanism could replace real insight and thinking. When the logical machinery gets embodied in an actual physical apparatus, the temptation becomes all the greater to let the machine do one's thinking for one. The question, the overwhelming question, then becomes: how far can the machine go in taking over human thought?

The tendency toward materialism is perhaps a permanent one in human nature, and within its limits a valid one. With the advent of the science of mechanics, in the 17th century, the materialistic inclination turns toward mechanism: the tendency to see phenomena everywhere as bits of machinery incarnate. Thus we get in La Mettrie, the 18th-century *philosophe*, those quaint illustrations of the human body as a system of imaginary gears, cogs, and ratchets. Man, the microcosm, is just another machine within the universal machine that is the cosmos. We smile at these illustrations as quaint and crude, but secretly we may still nourish the notion that they after all are in the right direction, though a little premature. With the advent of the computer, however, this temptation toward mechanism becomes more irresistible, for here we no longer have an obsolete machine of wheels and pulleys but one that seems able to reproduce the processes of the human mind.

Can machines think? This has now become a leading question for our time. It was first proposed in direct and explicit fashion by the British logician and computer expert Alan Turing in 1950. Turing himself, in addition to his gifts as a logician, was an unusual and interesting personality. During World War II he was part of the British team of intelligence experts that succeeded in breaking the German code and thus freeing a good deal of Allied shipping from the menace of the U-boats. After the war he returned to Cambridge, and continued his researches on logic and computer theory. But his life thereafter became rather beclouded and unhappy; he insisted on being an indiscreet homosexual and fell foul of the authorities. In 1954 he committed suicide, at the age of forty-one. For a man whose mind had been continuously engaged with the question of how the machine might guide and regulate life, he seems to have been sadly incapable of managing his own.

Turing's imagination leaped beyond the actual state of the computer to envisage its future possibilities. Writing in 1950, he predicted that in fifty years we would have computers with a storage capacity of 109 bits. Well, we are near the end of that period, and we do already have machines that approach that figure. We are thus in a position to test some of his prophecies about the future range of the computer's operations.

Among other things, Turing claimed that a future computer could very well write poetry. I propose here to center on this claim, because poetry would seem to be one use of the human mind that the machine could *not* duplicate. Indeed, the creation of a poem would seem to be at the opposite end of the mental spectrum from the additive and combinatorial operations of a machine. Turing, however, imagined a machine that had actually written a poem: and to be specific, he imagined the poem was Shakespeare's sonnet "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" Then he put the machine to a test.

For this purpose Turing devised what he called the imitation game. The question "Do machines think?" he held to be too vague; to give the question sense he replaced it by a more behavioral test.

In the imitation game, the machine and human being are placed in a room, and nearby is an examiner, E, who can put questions and receive their answers. For a machine with a suitable storage capacity, Turing holds, the examiner in 70 percent of the cases would not be able to judge which of the respondents was the human and which the computer, so connected and reasonable would the responses of the machine be.

Here are some of the questions that Turing puts to the machine that has just written Shakespeare's sonnet:

> *Examiner*: In the first line of your sonnet, which reads, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day," would not "a spring day" do as well or better?
>
> *Witness*: It wouldn't scan.
>
> *Examiner*: How about "a winter's day"? That would scan all right.
>
> *Witness*: Yes, but nobody wants to be compared to a winter's day. . . .

WILLIAM BARRETT *is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Pace University. His books include* The Truants *and* Irrational Man. *Like his essay, "Philosophy & the Disappearing Self," in our September 1984 issue, the present article is adapted from his new book,* Death of the Soul: From Descartes to the Computer, *to be published later this month by Anchor Press/Doubleday.* *Copyright © 1986 by William Barrett.*

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Thus, presumably, by giving such coherent and sensible answers the computer would prove that the poem to which it had given birth was not a freak accident.

TURING'S argument moves seductively, but if we pause for a moment, we begin to find it very questionable. In the first place, the question at issue is whether a machine could ever write a poem, and Turing's method of handling this question is to say, let us assume that a machine has actually produced a poem. Then we proceed to test it. In short, he assumes the very point at issue. If indeed (and it is a very big if) a machine had actually produced a poem, then we should expect that it would be able to answer very elementary questions about it. But the question at issue is the ability to produce the poem in the first place.

Then again, the questions Turing suggests are rather curious, for they omit the first and overwhelming question that would arise if a machine actually were to grind out Shakespeare's beautiful sonnet: is this an original poem of yours? If the machine is only quoting, then it is merely disgorging data already fed into it. But if the response is that the poem is indeed its own, and original, we are in for more serious trouble, for we move into the dimensions of style and history, from which poetry cannot escape. The next question would be: why have you written a poem in a style that was valid over three hundred years ago? In other words, we have to deal with the poem not merely as a manipulation of symbols, but as an act of human consciousness within time and history.

It is a curious twist of irony that this same point can be argued against the school of literary critics known as the deconstructionists. Just as for the partisans of the computer a poem is simply the adding of one symbol to another, for the deconstructionists, too, a poem is merely a collection of signs or symbols to be unraveled by the critic from any point or in any direction his ingenuity can supply. It might seem curious that these two groups—the literati of the avant-garde and the somber partisans of the computer—should here converge toward the same attitude. But if we reflect for a moment we shall not find it so strange. We have to recall that for a long time now the labor of a good part of our culture has been reductive: the effort to undermine in one way or another the spiritual status of the human person. And when thinking becomes generally reductive, we can expect that there will be surprising convergences of differing groups. When you dig the pit deep enough, waters from opposite directions will flow down the same hole.

BUT we have to insist that the poem is not merely a collocation of signs or symbols. If we take poetry seriously, if the experience of poetry is really a part of our life, then we do not merely read single poems. When the poet matters to us, when he really involves us, we read the body of his work—or as much of it as we can manage. The poet himself becomes a kind of spiritual presence in our life, a personality present to us through and within the poems.

Of course, we have to distinguish between this sense of personality and the trivial and accidental features of "personality" that figure in gossip columns. And here the example of T.S. Eliot becomes especially relevant. In his early criticism Eliot spoke against the poet's flaunting of personality. The genuine poet, he said, is one who seeks to escape from personality—and Eliot even uses a much stronger expression: the poet seeks the "extinction" of personality in his poems.

Yet there seems a rather ironic contrast between the critic's pronouncements and his actual performance as a poet. The body of Eliot's poetry, now that we have it all before us, strikes us as the work of a single personality—a unique and individual mind and sensibility. And this unity is there from beginning to end, through the changes of style and tone, through the long journey from despair into the affirmations of faith. It is always Eliot himself, a unique and individual soul, who speaks to us through and within the poems.

Now suppose that this poetry had been produced by a computer. What would the machine have to be capable of in order to produce this particular body of poetry?

It would first have to have a grasp of the contemporary state of the language, of the idiom, that would be vital and charged for modern readers of poetry. To be sure, our language is still English, and in that general sense is the same as Shakespeare's. But the language also changes from generation to generation: different words and rhythms of speech become charged for contemporary ears. Eliot, in his early poems especially, was one of the apostles of modernism, intent on writing a kind of poetry that would not be a repetition of outworn 19th-century idioms and styles. Then, we should have to presuppose in our imaginary computer an intuitive tact, a creative sensitivity, toward the living language. It is hard to see how one could install these qualities of mind in a machine, however vast you make its storage capacity. The writing of a poem is not merely the combination of discrete units of language.

BUT more than this: there is the relation of the poet to the past, to dead writers and their traditions. This fusion of past and present is one of Eliot's most original and remarkable achievements, both in his poetry and in his critical prose. One cannot, for example, grasp the full resonance of the poetry without some understanding of his critical explorations of the Elizabethans, the metaphysical poets, and certain French poets of the end of the 19th century. And Eliot did not add these influences one to another, like so many discrete units; they were part of an individual sensibility seeking to define itself, and what he saw in these predecessors was something that had not quite been seen before in the same way. His appropriation of the past was also a transformation of it.

Can we imagine a computer capable of even simulating these acts of mind? Make its storage capacity as vast as you wish, we would still need to equip it with some unique historical sense, an ability to see the pastness of the past as well as

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its presence, and to respond to the piercing actuality of the present as well as to its evanescence. This is a sense of time and history that cannot be achieved by the addition of units of information; otherwise, every encyclopedic pedant would be able to qualify as a creative historian.

FINALLY, to bring this tedious business to its conclusion, there is the fact of what may loosely be called the poet's development. The poet changes, ages, matures—and sometimes ripens into wisdom. He is, after all, a man of flesh and blood. That is a fact of which the partisans of the computer take too little note in their search for a mechanical substitute for the human mind.

How much of our consciousness is embedded in and inseparable from this fleshy envelope that we are? Certainly it is not the poet's business to write as a disembodied spirit. He falls in love, suffers, and his body ages—sometimes into the ripeness of vision: "Bodily decrepitude is wisdom," wrote William Butler Yeats, who turned the afflictions of old age into great poetry. But a machine cannot age in this way. Properly speaking, indeed, a machine cannot mature, for it is not an organic body, growing and ripening through time. As a piece of equipment, it becomes used and defective, its wires frayed and its circuits burned out, and shortly ready for the scrap heap. That might be a metaphorical description of some human lives, but only a very nihilistic and reductive one.

I HAVE no intention here of launching a diatribe against the computer as such, a tool that has its valuable and now indispensable uses. My quarrel, rather, is with the fantasies that have taken shape around this instrument. More often than not, the enthusiasts of the computer are unaware that they are speaking from a particular point of view, a particular philosophy, in the light of which they see the whole phenomenon of mind. And this view of mind is not new; we encounter it in David Hume and the British empiricists. This is the view that the nature of our human consciousness is essentially additive and atomistic. Its function consists in combining one discrete datum, or bits of data, with others; and mind itself is but an aggregate of such data.

It is not hard to see why users of the computer should easily fall into this view. They speak, for example, of the storage capacity of a particular machine, meaning the number of discrete units of information that can be fed into it and again extracted from it by the human attendant. And this way of speech becomes congenial when they turn their talk to the human mind. But their own disposition to see facts in a certain way is not merely one more separate datum in the list of facts; it is, rather, a point of view that provides the structure for the whole.

The reality of consciousness as we actually experience it is more than a grocer's list of disparate items. Its presence is more total and engulfing, and it can move backward and forward in time. In memory, for example, my mind may be jogged at times by some isolated fact or facts from the past of which I merely take incidental notice. But there is another experience of memory more total and vital than this. Something comes back to me from the past, from long ago, but it does not remain an isolated factual datum; I am suddenly back in the house where it happened, feeling as I once did, living in that world I once knew. Memories like this reintegrate us into the past. I look through time, and meet myself as I was; I am the same and other. The memory is the emergence into view of that enduring self that I am through time.

If we turn our eyes in the other direction in time, toward the future, we shall also encounter a consciousness that is not, or at least *not yet*, a mere listing of discrete data. I have, let us say, the vision of a particular project for the future. It comes to me not as an aggregate of ready-made items, but as a whole of which I have as yet only an intuitive grasp and which I must now proceed, with much sweat and toil, to articulate in its details. If our consciousness could not be groping in this way, it would cease to be genuinely creative, and it could not then be the powerful instrument that it has been in shaping human history.

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Technology & the Technocrats

THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH: A POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE SPACE AGE. By WALTER MCDOUGALL. *Basic Books. 576 pp. $25.95.*

Reviewed by ANGELO M. CODEVILLA

THE Reagan administration has announced that during the next five years it will conduct research into the technology of anti-missile weapons. During that time, it will strictly refrain from developing such weapons. If the researchers' standards are met, another five-to-seven-year period will be devoted to "development." Only *after* the full cycle of research, development, testing, and evaluation is completed will the U.S. decide the fundamental question of whether or not we intend to protect ourselves against ballistic missiles.

This approach to things, which has become the rule in the U.S. government, was once summed up by Colin Gray as follows: "What we want to do in space is affected greatly by our judgments as to what is technologically possible." In real life, however, things work the other way around. What we find technically feasible in space, or anywhere else, depends for the most part on what we *choose* to do. The willing make molehills out of mountains, or find ways around them; the unwilling do the opposite.

Walter McDougall's "political history" shows how the missiles and satellites that the U.S. and the Soviet Union possess today are less an expression of how far each country has been able to push the state of the art than of the priorities set by those whom each system has placed in positions of responsibility. Technology, McDougall's evidence demonstrates, is subordinate to political choice, which can hold it back or call it forth. This book, true to its title as a political history, chronicles the struggles over the choices made on each side; it is important to understand the debates of a generation ago because today's debates cover nearly the same ground, although with arguments not nearly so thoughtful.

Before we examine the substance of McDougall's history, however, we should glance at the thesis with which he sews it together. The government, McDougall argues, must assume responsibility for technical and scientific progress if there are to be spectacular achievements and even if there is to be a national defense. But this assumption of responsibility carries a cost in terms of freedom which we may not wish to pay. Thus, in the period before World War II, German and Soviet rocketry, patronized by totalitarian regimes, outshone Robert Goddard's private brilliance in the New Mexico desert. Then the war and its aftermath led the U.S. to begin force-feeding scientific progress, but with deep and, in McDougall's view justifiable, misgivings. With evident sympathy he recounts President Eisenhower's dogged, foredoomed effort to restrain the federal government's involvement in scientific-technical matters even as the cold war, and the prospect of space flight, caused that involvement to burgeon.

In the aftermath of Sputnik, we as a society agreed to mobilize vast resources behind the space program and, therefore, to increase the size and intrusiveness of the U.S. government in more areas than one. As McDougall writes, "Some pundits exaggerated the dangers of the Soviet satellite . . . in order to marshal support for their own agendas." The jump in federal spending for welfare, for example, was justified in order to develop the nation's "human resources." Once this became a legitimate federal goal, it could be pursued in ways wholly unrelated to space. Thus, when Congress passed the National Defense Education Act to help bright students become engineers, linguists, and so forth, it added money for students *not* going to college. "All that was needed," McDougall notes, "was a political synthesis of the cold-war posture and the progressive social posture and leaders willing and able to sell the synthesis. . . ." Quite so.

But where does this argument take us? Although his book abounds with hints that "technocracy" leads inexorably to Soviet *sharagas* and Nazi slave-labor camps, McDougall does not come out and say explicitly that a liberal society competing for high-tech weapons with a totalitarian regime is condemned to become like it. Nor does he discuss the possible ways in which free societies can minimize the chances of becoming more like their totalitarian enemies even as they "force-feed" the technology they need for their defense. Instead, and no doubt fortunately for the reader, he fully occupies himself with an excellent account of the fascinating events that have brought us to our current pass.

In the light of McDougall's account one can see why the Soviet Union has become the only country in the world that possesses missiles with the combination of power and accuracy to destroy enemy missiles in their silos, and why a variety of anti-missile devices are now coming off Soviet production lines while the U.S. has formally put off for another decade any decision about producing such devices. The reason is that on balance, and with the exception of the moon program, any shortcomings Soviet engineers possess in these fields have been more than offset by the superior ability of Soviet leaders to focus technical innovation.

"The rocket teams of both superpowers," McDougall writes, "protested that they could have launched a satellite years earlier if left to do so without military or political interference. But the genius of the engineers was only a necessary, not a sufficient, condition." The U.S.,

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although it got nearly all of Nazi Germany's rocket team, plus all of its records and almost all of its equipment, nevertheless lost the race for the first intercontinental ballistic missile as well as for the first earth satellite because its leaders were not particularly interested in winning that race. Later, when the United States exploited its technical superiority to go to the moon, it was because American politicians chose to respond in this particular way to popular pressure for achievements in space. The very same choice, however, led to a virtual shutdown of American efforts to use space to prepare for fighting, surviving, or winning wars.

Soviet leaders, by contrast, knew what they wanted from their rocketeers, and why they wanted it, long before the latter could deliver. The few members of Wernher von Braun's rocket team who had fallen into Stalin's hands were interested in space travel, as were, indeed, their colleagues who had wound up in the United States. But the Soviet leadership wanted missiles, and did not want to hear of space travel. Before it possessed the atomic bomb, McDougall writes, and long before it knew the bomb could be made small enough and powerful enough to be used as a warhead on a missile, the Politburo had decided to build intercontinental rockets. Research was fine, Stalin said, but the Soviet Union needed intercontinental strike systems as quickly as possible.

As for the complex leadership of the United States, it was cool not just to space travel but to missiles as well. Among the many technical advantages then enjoyed by the United States was a superior ability to fabricate rocket nozzles resistant to high heat. This allowed von Braun's team in Huntsville, Alabama to build bigger and more efficient engines than could be built in the Soviet Union. But many years would pass before von Braun received the authorization and the money to build those engines. Meanwhile, Soviet engineers, who did not have the metals for big, efficient engines, did have a mandate to deliver a product. So they got around the technical problem by clustering many relatively inefficient engines. The result was the world's first intercontinental rocket, the rocket that launched Sputnik and that is still in use today as the world's most prolific space-launch vehicle.

IN THE U.S., no military service or unit—indeed, no one—was assigned the responsibility for building long-range rockets. Rocketry was divided into many technology programs, none with a mission or a deadline. The services, however, were jealous enough to fight for the *option* to build such rockets. They did not intend to exercise those options, because to do so would have taken money out of current programs, but each wanted to protect itself against the possibility that some time in the future any of the others would have a monopoly on a new mission and new budgets.

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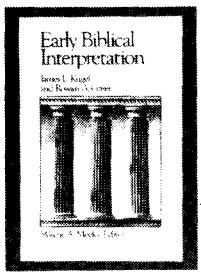

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Absence of purpose engendered bad technical judgments. Vannevar Bush, the foremost expert on military research and development, had declared in 1945 that no one knew how to build an ICBM and that one would not be built for a long time to come. By 1949, he could no longer rule out the possibility that some might be built, but he thought the cost would be "astronomical." Bush and a host of others were satisfied that anything reentering the atmosphere after an intercontinental ballistic flight would be heated by friction to temperatures higher than any material known to man could withstand. He was right, and, in a way, he is still right. But engineers who started rather than stopped with that fact have been able to get around it in two interesting ways: with materials whose surfaces ablate, or peel off, as they burn, cooling the rest, and with materials that do not withstand but dissipate heat (as in the tiles of the space shuttle).

The truth is that the research-and-development establishment was literally not interested in building ICBM's, and ridiculed those who did. Thus, Vannevar Bush spoke for thousands of bright but smug people:

> Some eminent military men, exhilarated perhaps by a short immersion in matters scientific, have publicly asserted that we are [interested in high-trajectory guided missiles spanning thousands of miles]. We have been regaled by scary articles . . . we even have the exposition of missiles fired so fast that they leave the earth and proceed around it indefinitely as satellites, like the moon, for some vaguely specified military purposes.

This in 1949, when the Army's rocket team was sitting on reasonably concrete plans and on basic technology nearly identical to those used for U.S. ICBM's and satellites almost a decade later.

AT ABOUT the same time, however, Americans began to learn that what our "best and brighest" were saying could not or at least should not be done was in fact being done on the Russian steppes. Prominent outsiders, notably then-Senator Lyndon B. Johnson and Hanson Baldwin, the military correspondent of the New York *Times*, charged the government with ignorance, confusion, and a lack of policy. In 1950, as a response, President Truman appointed the president of the Chrysler Corporation as his special adviser in this field. Mistaking this as a decision, rather than as a move to defuse the pressure for making a decision, the press touted the birth of a new era of push-button warfare, and the President's new adviser as its czar.

Of course, he was no such thing. He appointed a blue-ribbon technical panel that recommended a long-term research-and-development program. The panel also defined the program's goals: a rocket able to carry a 10,000-pound payload 5,000 miles with an accuracy of 0.01 degrees. Until we could build that, the government would not consider whether to build missiles. Therefore, for the foreseeable future, we would build nothing.

This filibuster-by-technical-definition lasted almost four years until news of the Soviet H-bomb—and of Soviet missile tests—caused a new panel to be appointed. The new panel found that a rocket carrying one-third the payload with one-half the accuracy that had been previously specified—something we had known how to build for some years—would be worthy of being called an ICBM after all. Armed with this new report, a junior civilian at the Pentagon made a fuss about unrealistic technical requirements, and finally, in 1954, a special organization was created within the Air Force specifically to produce an ICBM. The Soviets were far ahead.

THE story of the race for the first satellite is not very different. The Eisenhower administration became interested in orbiting a satellite only in the context of the International Geophysical Year. Although the Soviets had made no secret of their thrust toward space, and although many American leaders realized that both military advantage and prestige were at stake, the administration worried about the possible disapproval of international opinion, and even of the Soviet Union itself, if America were to launch satellites over other countries without permission. Even after the Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957 von Braun pleaded in vain with the Secretary of Defense, Neil H. McElroy:

> We have the hardware on the shelf. For God's sake, turn us loose and let us do something. We can put up a satellite in sixty days, Mr. McElroy! Just give us the green light and sixty days!

But the green light did not flash until the administration had been further embarrassed by Soviet successes, and had begun a slide in public-opinion polls that ultimately carried the Republicans out of the White House.

Why did the government let itself be ruled by the inertia of the military bureaucracy and the politically faint-hearted? McDougall cites Eisenhower's aversion to technocracy, his concern for a balanced budget, and his unwillingness to take funds from existing military programs. But surely there was another factor, one which McDougall alludes to elsewhere when he describes U.S. policy regarding the use of nuclear weapons in the early postwar period as "striking for its tentativeness, confusion, and quest for the least drastic option."

The period at the end of the Eisenhower and at the beginning of the Kennedy administration is the exception that proves the rule. Two Secretaries of Defense, Thomas S. Gates, Jr. and Robert S. McNamara (and the latter only until 1963), believed that by targeting Soviet airfields and missiles, and by building good defenses against both bombers and missiles, the U.S. could deter war and, if it came, win it while minimizing American casualties.

The strategic triad on which, with only a few changes, the U.S. still relies today—1,000 Minuteman missiles, Poseidon submarines, and B-52's—was ordered in that period. As McDougall notes, no sooner had McNamara ordered it than he saw it would have to undergo constant alteration to match changes in the target base (e.g., Soviet hardened silos). Defensive weapons, too, would have to be constantly renewed. Thus, for

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a variety of reasons, the establishment that McNamara created and which still endures in the Pentagon decided that we had reached a technological plateau, and that our forces would be frozen. As a result, by 1967, according to the standards McNamara had established *in 1963* for judging the efficacy of American forces, the United States was underarmed. But by then the standard had changed.

THE military forces, the military strategy, and the space program we have inherited from the 1960's all rest on the premise that outer space will remain a sanctuary through which the city-killing missiles of both sides will be able to fly, as well as the satellites that reassure both sides that the scheme is still in place. This orthodoxy is embodied in hardware and in a technical-managerial elite that rules both in the Pentagon and in the aerospace companies, and that has frozen the mental habits of senior officials concerning what might or might not be useful in missiles and space equipment. This in turn has led to an unwillingness to tackle new technical tasks, sooner or later rationalized by the judgment that those tasks are impossible. Reports that the Soviets have either solved or circumvented certain problems are similarly rationalized away as untrue or, if true, meaningless.

The actual history of the 1970's and 80's, however, belies this orthodoxy. The Soviets have built precisely the kinds of missile-killing offensive missiles that our "deal" with them sought to prevent, that our best and brightest judged so terribly difficult to build, and that our intelligence community denied for over a decade the Soviets *were* building. This force carries, at present, 6,000 missile-killing warheads. We plan nothing comparable—ever.

The Soviets have also built a ground-based anti-ballistic missile system much like the one both superpowers supposedly forswore in the ABM Treaty of 1972. The technology in the Soviets' six Pechora-class battle-management radars, in the Flat Twin engagement radars (in full production), and in the SH-4 and SH-8 interceptors (in full production) is much superior to that in the systems the U.S. gave up in 1972. The Soviets are also producing a surface-to-air missile system that defends lightly attacked targets—i.e., the vast majority of targets—against ballistic warheads. The Soviet Union is almost certain to place a high-energy laser in space within the next two years.

NONE of this is better than what we could build today. How, then, do U.S. officials justify the decision not to build the kinds of counterforce missiles, ground-based antimissile devices, and first-generation space-based lasers that the Soviets are building?

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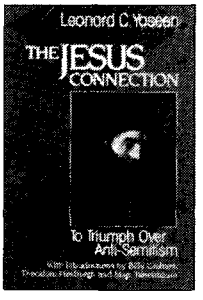

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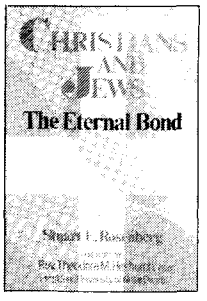

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claim that we should not imitate the Soviets in their determination to waste money. Most pretend they are not really against the new weapons, but are simply waiting for the technology to mature. Behind a screen of technical and pseudo-technical controversies, which they declare beyond their own competence to adjudicate, they hide (often from themselves) the need to make hard political and strategic choices.

Thus, our government has reacted to the prospect of anti-missile defenses the way it reacted in 1950 to the prospect of ballistic missiles —only more so. The President has appointed commissions to study strategic forces and anti-missile defenses. These commissions have been made up of figures whose interests are contrary to the course of action they have been asked to study. The commissions have also defined the job that the new weapons must do by establishing requirements for them that current technology cannot meet.

For example, the Fletcher Panel stipulated that to be considered an acceptable anti-missile weapon, a laser device must place upon its target 100,000 joules of radiant energy per square centimeter. Clearly not good enough according to this yardstick are currently producible lasers that can place 7,000 joules per square centimeter at a distance of 1,000 kilometers. Never mind the fact that the missiles now in the U.S. and Soviet arsenals are likely to blow up if they receive considerably less than one-seventh that amount of radiation. Never mind that no one has ever designed, much less built, a missile to the Fletcher Panel's specifications. The list of such disqualifications-by-definition is very long.

In the artificial world of military research-and-development management, just as in the artificial world of arms control, a weapon may be and yet not be. The Soviet Union's SA-12 is in fact a potent anti-missile device, but since it does not fit into the categories of the ABM Treaty, or into the category of weapons the U.S. is considering, American officials who live by those categories do not regard it as an ABM weapon, even as they concede its ability to kill warheads. The Pentagon publication *Soviet Military Power* calls the Soviet Union's forthcoming space laser weapon an anti-satellite device. It does not ask how much destructive energy this "anti-satellite" device could place on a ballistic missile *x* kilometers away, or what effect on our retaliatory abilities the Soviets could achieve by launching a dozen such "anti-satellite" devices in a crisis.

Thus do the masters of technology declare themselves the humble servants of the technocrats. In confronting today's evasions of responsibility, it is useful to know that similar things have happened before. *The Heavens and the Earth* reveals that a generation ago, the pressure of events forced high officials to take on responsibilities they would rather not have exercised. McDougall's portraits of the men who at that time forced the bureaucracy's hand leaves one wondering whether today, as then, there may be individuals in public life ambitious enough actually to employ their offices to accomplish great things.

Reporting the Holocaust

BEYOND BELIEF: THE AMERICAN PRESS AND THE COMING OF THE HOLOCAUST 1933-1945. By DEBORAH E. LIPSTADT. *Free Press. 370 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by DANIEL CASSE

WHEN Generals Eisenhower and Patton arrived at Ohrdorf, one of the first concentration camps to be liberated by American forces at the end of World War II, they insisted that their troops view the entire camp. Later, standing among the decaying bodies and naked, skeletal prisoners, Eisenhower addressed his men: "I want every American unit not actually in the front lines to see this place. We are told that the American soldier does not know what he is fighting for. Now, at least, he will know what he is fighting against."

Eisenhower's words touch on what has become a central issue in the study of the Holocaust: the inability of many Americans during the war years to believe the stories of German atrocities. Indeed, as Lucy S. Dawidowicz has pointed out, historians of the Holocaust have lately shifted the focus of their inquiry from Hitler's war against the Jews to America's response to it. Could the United States have saved Jews condemned to extermination? Did the State Department suppress information about Germany's anti-Semitic policies? Did President Roosevelt consciously decide not to act on behalf of Europe's Jews?

Deborah E. Lipstadt, who teaches Jewish history at UCLA, is representative of this shift. In *Beyond Belief*, a careful study of the American press from Hitler's ascension to power to the final liberation of the camps in Europe, she examines how American editors and reporters treated news of Hitler's anti-Jewish legislation, the deportation of the Jews, and, as the story unfolded, the systematic extermination of European Jewry.

THE record of the press that emerges from this study is dismal and pathetic. On the basis of her survey of dozens of American newspapers and prominent magazines of opinion, Professor Lipstadt is able to show that most reports of Germany's campaign against the Jews were greeted with skepticism, treated as secondary news items, or, in some cases, not reported at all.

Professor Lipstadt is careful not to issue an across-the-board condemnation of the press. There were, she points out, many publications —the New York *Post*, *PM*, the *New Republic*, and the *Nation* among them—that consistently gave prominence to reports of Nazi persecution of the Jews, and whose editors urged the American government to act on their behalf. These, however, were the exception. The majority of the American press, as she demonstrates, deemphasized stories of Jewish persecution. When such stories were featured they were often "universalized," so that Jews became "Poles" or "Ukrainians." In other cases, stories were simply buried in the back pages of the news section, or, as in accounts of the

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destruction of the Hungarian Jewish community, were positioned adjacent to comic strips or beneath wedding announcements.

The New York *Times*, despite its relatively extensive coverage of events, comes in for Professor Lipstadt's harshest criticism, because smaller papers often emulated its decisions and what happened at the *Times* had consequences for American press coverage in general. Between June and December of 1942, when reports of the Nazi decision to implement the "Final Solution" were first reaching Britain and the U.S., the *Times* carried only one front-page story on the subject. When, in that same year, eyewitnesses to the concentration and extermination camps managed to escape to England, the *Times* cast doubt on their testimony by describing them as individuals who *said* they were eyewitnesses.

In the fierce debate over how much the United States could have done to prevent the murder of the Jews, Professor Lipstadt makes her own view clear. The first sentence of *Beyond Belief* reads: "During the 1930's and 1940's America could have saved thousands and maybe hundreds of thousands of Jews but it did not do so." She also makes clear her assessment of the role of the press in that failure. Had the press been more responsible in its reporting, had it stressed the urgency of the situation in Europe, it would, she argues, have so galvanized the American people that they in turn would have brought pressure on their government to act.

PROFESSOR LIPSTADT certainly makes a strong case in *Beyond Belief* for the proposition that the American press was delinquent, and therefore partly responsible for the public's ignorance of what was happening and its skepticism about stories of gas chambers and mass graves. She also presents some evidence—as others already have done—of deliberate attempts within the State Department and some other government agencies to suppress confirmed reports of the Nazis' intentions. Yet in the nature of things she is able to offer very little evidence that a more responsible press would have been able to influence government policy. Indeed, such a claim would appear most difficult to sustain.

These days, of course, many people insist that the press can change the course of history, but such people usually turn out to be journalists. In fact, purportedly serious studies of the power of the press are themselves a recent phenomenon, reflecting our contemporary preoccupation with the media. In this sense, Professor Lipstadt is a thoroughly contemporary historian. She accords to the press of the 1930's and the 1940's a degree of power and prestige that only the press of today dares to arrogate to itself. From this exaggerated assessment of press power a disturbing thesis emerges, namely, that the failure of the press to report on Jewish suffering was directly re-

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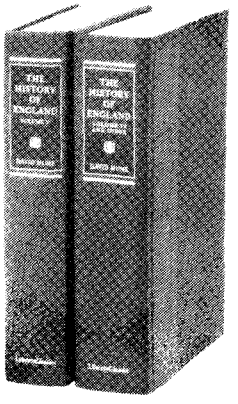

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sponsible for the decision of our government not to alleviate that suffering and, conversely, that the government's apparent lack of compassion was but a reflection of the indifference shown by the nation's newspapers. Thus, she writes, the failure of the U.S. to save Jewish lives "was a cumulative and collective failure. The press was ultimately as culpable as the government." Such assertions not only misjudge historical reality but distort the nature of the press. A naive observer might be forgiven for believing that the press guides government policy; for a scholar to chastise the press for *failing* to do so is folly.

No one would deny that the press exerts an enormous influence on public opinion, shaping the way people view events and even setting the agenda of public debate. But it is a large leap from there to holding the press responsible, as Professor Lipstadt does, for the decisions made by the public or the government. Today, in the light of Vietnam and Lebanon, the notion that the press could ever function as an arbiter of policy in wartime seems especially untenable. Despite advances in technology, unlimited financial resources, and unprecedented access to sources, the news from Vietnam and Lebanon was distorted, reporting was sensationalized and politicized, and the public was misinformed. Perhaps what is most illuminating about *Beyond Belief* is its demonstration that the press acted no more responsibly under Roosevelt than it does under Reagan.

IN THE END we come back to the question of why, when evidence of extermination was available, was this evidence not given the prominence it deserved. In 1945, when the press finally did have access to the camps in Europe, editors and correspondents who had previously regarded all stories of a Final Solution with suspicion piously cried that what they now saw was "beyond belief." But was it really beyond belief? Since 1933 Hitler's intentions had been evident, in events —riots, boycotts, deportations—witnessed by thousands. By 1943, innumerable accounts of mass executions and of deserted Jewish ghettos had reached the U.S. *Beyond Belief*, despite its misdirected attempt to hold the press responsible for American policy, is nevertheless a grim and valuable reminder of the fallibility of the press in the discharge of its first responsibility—reporting the news.

Dickens as Conservative

DICKENS AND THE SOCIAL ORDER. By MYRON MAGNET. *University of Pennsylvania Press. 544 pp. $39.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT ALTER

THE novels of Charles Dickens often create an initial impression of great simplicity, compensated for by extraordinary intensity —in contrast, say, to the novels of George Eliot, which are long on complexity and short on intensity. But if this impression of simplicity were entirely accurate, it should be easy to define the nature of Dickens's enterprise, his conception of society and humanity. In point of fact, this has proved to be an elusive undertaking.

Myron Magnet's study of Dickens in his crucially formative phase from 1837 to 1844 offers strong evidence for two fresh perceptions of Dickens: that he thought seriously, even systematically, about the nature of society; and that his political imagination (though not his practical politics) was essentially conservative. Of these two points, the former is actually the more heretical, because critics have automatically tended to assume that Dickens was an indiscriminate, brilliantly improvising entertainer who never devoted consistent thought to anything. But even on the issue of the novelist's conservatism, Magnet shifts the grounds of the discussion in a most instructive way, which is precisely to see Dickens's political imagination in terms of his concern with social theory.

Jack Lindsay and other Marxist critics have found in Dickens an in-

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tuition of the necessity of revolution, as is the way of Marxists with even the most reactionary writers whom they happen to like (thus Georg Lukács on Balzac), but this is hardly an argument that deserves much attention. George Orwell, and many critics after him, conceived Dickens as an exemplary 19th-century reformist liberal, a view which is certainly valid on one level and which Magnet in fact concedes. Another conventional notion about Dickens—one that has been picked up of late by neo-Marxists and post-structuralists—is that Dickens is fundamentally a nostalgic conservative, forever dreaming of the beatitudes of a lost age: stagecoach instead of steam engine, country instead of town, the ritual conviviality of blazing hearth and groaning board instead of the bleakness and grime of the industrial urban warrens.

Although there are, undeniably, memorable moments of nostalgia in Dickens, Magnet suggests that these have little to do with the writer's serious conception of society, history, and politics. On the contrary, the farther one goes back in history, as Dickens makes clear in a passage at the beginning of *Martin Chuzzlewit* cited by Magnet, "the greater the amount of violence and vagabondism," of "divers slaughterous conspiracies and bloody frays." The conservatism of Dickens's imagination, then, proves to be conceptually hard-headed rather than nostalgic, and it is inseparable from his assumption that the meliorative force of social institutions is our sole means, however imperfect and precarious, of deflecting man's great vocation for chaos.

This is, of course, a quintessentially Hobbesian idea of human nature and society; and Magnet argues persuasively that in this formative period Dickens meditated deeply on Hobbes's notion that the life of man before entering into the social compact was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." The crystallization of Dickens's reflections on man and society is followed out here through a sequence of four books: *Nicholas Nickleby*; *Barnaby Rudge*; *American Notes*, the travel book Dickens wrote after his 1841 trip to America; and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the novel that embodies the negative aspect of the novelist's American experience.

In *Nicholas Nickleby*, as Magnet sees it, Dickens first undertook a general imaginative investigation of the pervasive component of aggression in human nature, but he as yet had no coherent conception of society as a whole—hence the inconsistencies and the patches of pure sentimentalism in that novel. Such a conception was then powerfully articulated in *Barnaby Rudge*, the novel about the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots of 1780 which Magnet considers to be Dickens's first masterpiece. In the writer's voyage across much of the American continent, he then fancied he was observing concrete instances of the dreaded state of nature that menaced social stability, and these perceptions were recorded differently in *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

THE centerpiece of Magnet's study, taking up more than half the book, is his discussion of *Barnaby Rudge*, a novel by and large slighted by previous critics. The seven chapters devoted to *Barnaby Rudge* nail down the main argument of the book and beautifully illustrate its strengths as well as its incidental weaknesses. Magnet convincingly shows that the novel has a coherent structure which answers to the new-found coherence of Dickens's conception of society and its relation to human nature. The first half of the novel, set in 1775 in a seemingly private sphere, is preoccupied with various pairs of fathers and sons and with the concomitant issue of coercive authority and the impulse of rebellion. These concerns then explode on a political scale in the ghastly riots instigated by the deluded demagogue, Lord George Gordon, that take up the second half of the novel.

Magnet demonstrates how the two halves of the novel lock together thematically and even imagistically, and how the destructive mob

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is represented as a demonic unleashing of the state of nature (Hobbesian thought crossed with Miltonic rhetoric). On the level of character, moreover, the dangers of the state of nature are dramatized in the two fatherless sons who are coupled in the riots—Barnaby Rudge, the idiot child who is swept up by the insurrection, and Maypole Hugh, the satyr-like bastard who leaps to the forefront of the violent mob.

All this is argued with incisive critical judgment in lucid, lively prose, and Magnet effectively buttresses his contention about Dickens's overriding concern with the ambiguities of authority by a tactful Freudian reading of details of the novel, particularly emphasizing images of castration that follow upon images of phallic assertion. But he makes his case so persuasively that one wishes he would have also made it more concisely: there is a redundancy in the use of overlapping prooftexts (and sometimes also overlapping secondary sources) to make more or less the same point that probably owes a good deal to the origins of this book in a doctoral program.

My second general reservation is that Magnet's evaluations of Dickens, in focusing so steadily on the aspects of his novels that have implications for social theory, tend to ignore other aspects where there may be serious weaknesses. Thus, in *Barnaby Rudge* the woodenness of many of the dialogues between father and son, and between suitor and eligible young woman, the mechanical quality of much of the humor, the unbelievable contrivances of the plot, are not even mentioned. Again, in the discussion of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, though the exploration of human nature in that novel is genuinely illuminating, nothing is said about Martin's vapidity as a protagonist or about the quality of didactic insistence in his transformation from smug self-admiration to compassionate maturity, a quality that makes this so much less satisfying a *Bildungsroman* than either *David Copperfield* or *Great Expectations*.

These are, in any case, relatively minor flaws in a book that should significantly alter our general understanding of Dickens. What strikes me as Magnet's central strength is that through his fine attentiveness to the fictional articulation of political issues, he never reduces Dickens's thinking about the social order to a single, programmatic position. In fact, the high tension of images and events in the fiction suggests that by the time of *Barnaby Rudge*, the novelist had come to a richly dialectic view of society and authority. As Magnet notes, the two chief symbols for society in that novel are keys—equally used to protect property and to lock up prisoners—and gallows. The force of coercion society exercises in order to sustain itself can exact a terrible price from its members, can easily degenerate into brutal oppression, and one of the most horrendous figures in the book is Dennis, the hangman. Yet without keys and gallows, the anarchic state of nature is always ready to reassert itself, as we see quite awesomely in the tide of fire and blood that the maddened rioters become.

From the late 1830's onward, Dickens wrote—against utilitarianism and other intellectual currents that claimed man was guided by rational self-interest—out of a profound insight into humanity's immense capacity for destruction. We are in debt to Myron Magnet for his demonstration of the centrality of this insight and how it was ramified into a systematic view of society which helped generate the imaginative power of Dickens's mature fiction.

Litany of Disaster

MILITARY INCOMPETENCE. By RICHARD A. GABRIEL. *Hill & Wang. 208 pp. $16.95.*

Reviewed by J. KIRBY SIMON

"IF a military force cannot perform well on the battlefield, then anything else it might do doesn't really matter." So writes Richard Gabriel in *Military Incompetence*, an analysis of five of this country's most recent military actions: the Mayaguez rescue mission, the Iran rescue mission, Beirut, Grenada, and a failed rescue mission in Vietnam. In each of these operations, Gabriel contends, our armed forces failed "to demonstrate an application of military technique that in most armies would pass as acceptable." Moreover, he insists that the blame for these failures rests not with a stingy Congress or a meddling executive, but with flaws inherent in our military establishment.

The source of this criticism is a reserve army major and political-science professor with twenty-one years of active and reserve duty under his belt. Though he has recently found himself at odds with the Pentagon brass, he is no Philip Agee-like defector but a thoughtful and patriotic military man. Of his fifteen previous works, the most influential, *Crisis in Command*, which he wrote with Paul Savage, has been widely adopted in the community of defense analysts for its critique of the American system of educating, assigning, and promoting officers.

Here, Gabriel applies that theoretical foundation to detailed case studies. This microanalysis gives *Military Incompetence* the feel of a Harvard Business School textbook—only there are no success stories. Drawing on information from official accounts, news reports, interviews, and more esoteric sources such as the still-classified operations plan for the Iran mission (obtained through contacts in Iran), Gabriel compiles a litany of disaster.

We learn that the Iran rescue mission, portrayed in the media as a victim of dust *ex machina*, was actually a casualty of fierce interservice competition and astonishingly poor planning. Two of the helicopters that dropped out of the mission did so for invalid reasons. Their Marine crews, assigned as a result of pressure by the Corps to be included in the rescue operation, were simply unfamiliar with the aircraft and unversed in long-range flying.

While they had no business in Iran, the Marines should have been given exclusive rights to the Gre-

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J. KIRBY SIMON, *a new contributor, is a graduate of Yale who specializes in military affairs.*

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nada invasion—a classic Leatherneck operation if ever there was one. Instead, in another four-service fiasco, they were assigned a largely exhibitionary role. Of course we did win in Grenada, but according to Gabriel, only because we could not have lost. The United States, he writes, used seven full battalions and parts of two others to defeat 679 Cubans, of whom all but fifty had not been primarily trained as combat troops. Moreover, fewer than one-third of our dead were killed by hostile action; the rest died through accidents and "friendly fire." The operation cost the lives of 67 Grenadan civilians, largely as a result of misdirected firepower. The island was not seized at once, as it might have been, but was taken piecemeal, a tactic which minimized our tremendous advantage in men and firepower. And so on.

Gabriel's revelations concerning the Mayaguez and Sontay (Vietnam) missions are equally shocking, as are—of course—the circumstances of the Beirut massacre.

TAKEN alone, an anthology of horror stories does not constitute an indictment of leadership. Even successful operations have their snafus, an almost inevitable result of what Clausewitz called "the fog of war." What this book has done is to trace those failures to their roots in the current system of command.

According to Gabriel, the American military is plagued by two sets of problems. One, involving the organizational structure of our armed forces, has of late received a great deal of attention in Congress and the media. Like most defense analysts outside the Pentagon, Gabriel favors the abolition of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which he sees as useless at best and, at worst, a breeding ground for catastrophic interservice rivalry. He also makes the usual arguments in favor of the draft.

Perhaps because these issues have been so highly publicized, however, Gabriel stresses his other concern, the quality of the officer corps. Most observers agree that the past quarter-century has seen a blurring of the traditional distinctions between military and civilian in this country. The trend began during the Kennedy administration, when Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara recreated the military in the image of a large corporation, and was accelerated by President Nixon's Gates Commission of 1969.

Clearly, the reformers' dreams of a more rational military have not been realized. Instead, says Gabriel, this evolution has undermined the status of the combat leader while elevating that of the administrator-bureaucrat. He notes that during the 1950's, tactical and strategic instruction claimed 655 hours per year at the Army Command and General Staff College, while two decades later that figure had been cut to 173 hours. Meanwhile, the National Defense University in Washington had established a course in how to testify before congressional committees. (In the same vein, Edward Luttwak has observed that West Point possesses no department of military history.)

Gabriel asserts that the civilianizing of the military has eroded the ethos of self-sacrifice and honor upon which battlefield success ultimately depends. (Perhaps it also has something to do with the recent spate of episodes of treason-for-hire and fraud among current and former officers.) He condemns the frenzy for promotion which sends officers hopping from billet to billet, school to school, "getting their tickets punched" while never lingering long enough to master assignments or to forge strong bonds with their units. He also notes with disgust the absence of dismissals or resignations following the debacles he analyzes, and the decoration inflation which attended the Grenada operation.

TO COMBAT the malaise, Gabriel makes five recommendations. He would reduce the number of generals and colonels to improve the overall quality of leadership and lessen bureaucratic wrangling over turf. He would shift the emphasis in service academies and command schools from engineering and managerial skills to strategy and tactics. He would substantially lengthen periods of assignment, and increase the standard career span from

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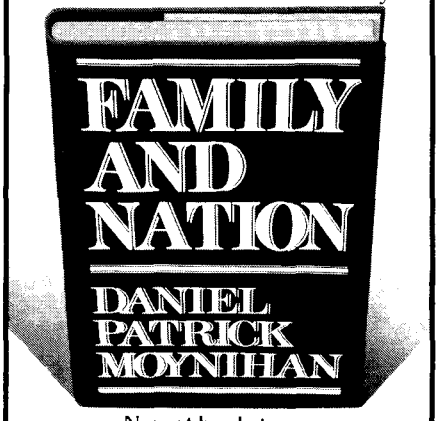

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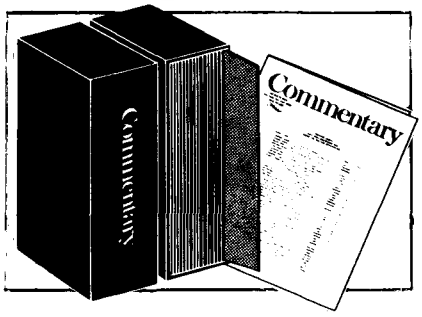

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twenty to thirty years. He would formulate a code of ethics for officers "through which to socialize young members to the profession and punish and expel those who cannot or will not observe" it. And, finally, he would introduce service-academy cadets to the liberal arts, to instill in them an appreciation of the "moral dimension" of war. *Military Incompetence* makes a strong case for each of these proposals.

The only real flaw in this book is that it presents the military in a vacuum, as though the values of a society were not inevitably reflected in its armed services. In particular, Gabriel neglects those aspects of American culture which run counter to what he calls "the way of the soldier." That way derives from a hierarchic and chivalric tradition fundamentally foreign to the American mind, and cannot be easily reconciled with a culture devoted to personal liberty and individual aggrandizement. It is not a coincidence that when Gabriel looks for exemplars of military excellence he ignores even the pre-McNamara United States in favor of Israel, Britain, France, Germany, and ancient Rome. This is not to suggest that Gabriel's proposals are misguided, simply that the impact of any genuine reform will be circumscribed by the basic orientation of our society.

One might also complain about the book's documentation, or rather lack thereof. Many of the most crucial revelations, including those which contradict official statements from the Pentagon, rely on interviews held by the author with anonymous sources. Such methods naturally inhibit verification and leave Gabriel open to charges of sensationalism or ax-grinding. Still, anyone even vaguely familiar with the operation of the service bureaucracies knows about the fury which awaits those who blow their whistles in public. Moreover, the sagacity evinced by the author in his previous work would seem to make him a trustworthy confessor.

All in all, one hopes that *Military Incompetence* will be read and heeded by those entrusted with our nation's protection and with the welfare of our fighting men.

The Rise of Atheism

WITHOUT GOD, WITHOUT CREED: THE ORIGINS OF UNBELIEF IN AMERICA. By JAMES TURNER. *Johns Hopkins University Press. 316 pp. $26.50.*

Reviewed by
RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

IF THE argument of James Turner is accepted, a major rewriting of cultural history is in order. Turner, who teaches history at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, contends that "Until little more than a century ago, virtually everyone within the orbit of European culture agreed that a superhuman power was somehow responsible for the universe and that this fact determined the purpose of life." And then, in the second half of the 19th century, something happened. What happened is reflected in an 1869 letter by Charles Eliot Norton to his friend John Ruskin: "There is a matter on which I have been thinking much of late. It does not seem to me that the evidence concerning the being of God, and concerning immortality, is such as to enable us to assert anything in regard to either of these topics." Soon, hesitant agnosticism gave way to what had until then been almost universally condemned as atheism. It became quite respectable to say in public, "I do not believe in God." A century later, and despite the fact that 95 percent of the American people may believe in God, according to Turner such belief had become a "subcultural" phenomenon.

Turner's is a work of intellectual history and, more precisely, "a study of the fate of one idea: the belief that God exists." He wants to determine how it happened that at a certain point in history, "*available ideas* in the culture changed so as to make unbelief viable."

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Most of our textbooks have a ready answer to Turner's question. It happened because of "the process of secularization." But to say that unbelief was produced by secularization is something of a tautology. So the better textbooks explain that secularization or unbelief was caused by the advance of science, human rationality, and the course of progress in which man assumed control of his destiny and no longer needed the idea of God for purposes of explanation or of consolation.

In short, most of us have been educated to believe that there is a necessary and causal connection between secularization and modernization. Turner says he too began by accepting this conventional account, but has been forced to the conclusion that it "stands the problem of unbelief on its head." He does not discount the importance of science and social transformation, but finally, he argues, unbelief is not something that *happened to* religion. "On the contrary, religion caused unbelief."

It is not just religion in general that is at fault (and Turner clearly believes a question of fault is involved), but the culturally regnant religion of Reformed Protestantism. This is the mainline, or old-line, religion of America's "brand-name" churches: Presbyterian, Congregational, Unitarian, liberal Methodist and Baptist. So eager were they to accommodate belief to modernity that the two became indistinguishable, with the result that belief was eventually viewed as eminently dispensable.

While much that developed in America was genuinely new, Turner knows the roots must be traced to European experience. Thus, the first half of his book examines belief and unbelief in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment. "It is not so clear," Turner decides, "that any atheists actually existed. Searching for full-fledged deniers of God before the 18th century sometimes resembles hunting for the unicorn." Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Bacon, Descartes, and a host of other worthies in the pantheon of modernity were devout believers who certainly did not think they were contributing to a process of secularization. To be sure, the term atheist was used in those days, but it typically referred to what we might call impiety or religious dissent. As Francis Bacon observed, "All that impugn a received religion or superstition are by the adverse part branded with the name of atheists."

OUTSPOKEN atheists, full-fledged deniers of God, such as Robert Ingersoll (d. 1899), are a rather recent phenomenon on the Western scene, according to Turner. They felt they were the vanguard of the future because liberal religion was manifestly on the run, scurrying to adapt belief to every latest definition of "reality" promulgated by science or the prophets of social progress. By the middle of the 19th century the scene had been set for the cultural triumph of unbelief, and this was a triumph that extended to the churches themselves:

Few victories have concealed so much irony. Even while damning Deists, church leaders swallowed the Deist conception of a natural-law God. Even while lauding the converted heart, they absorbed the maxim that belief in God rests on intellectual assent to a demonstrable proposition. Even while preaching the blood of the Lamb, they devoured the Enlightenment's moralism and its God bound by human morality.

Religious realities that could not be demonstrated by Enlightenment criteria of truth—realities such as divine grace and judgment, spiritual communion, authoritative inspiration—"either faded away or drifted into supernatural dissociation from ordinary reality." By the end of the century, many thoughtful people had come to the conclusion that it made little sense to revere the carcass of a thoroughly eviscerated religion.

The last century's reputed battle

Raymond Aron

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between religion and science was really not much of a battle at all, Turner believes. As quickly as the rules of knowledge were changed, religion adjusted to the new game. Finally, the business of keeping religion up to date became tedious and was mainly left to those with a vested interest in it. "Relatively few on either side [religion and science] *confronted* the other; rather, science all too easily *displaced* religion as an object of interest."

By no means did everyone just drift away or lose interest in religion. Well into this century there were humanitarians who felt it their moral duty to attack religion and its institutions. Ironically, however, their condemnation of religion employed the same moral reasoning which progressive religion had declared to be beyond dispute. In a culture in which "suffering in any quantity had become less tolerable," the question of theodicy loomed large and God was found to be guilty—or, more frequently, nonexistent—at the bar of human judgment, which religion itself had named as the ultimate supreme court.

Following the liberation from traditional belief, some who recognized that man was incorrigibly *homo religiosus* sought to construct alternative channels of devotion in the "religions" of science, nature, art, or historical progress. For example, what John Dewey did not hesitate to call "the religion of secular humanism" had numerous adherents, and perhaps still does. By the middle of the present century, militant atheism had receded: a Madalyn Murray O'Hair is culturally marginal, an almost amusing atavism. There is no reason to rage against the darkness of religion when it is culturally agreed that, with respect to whatever eternal verities there may be, we are all in the dark. Each of us, it is said, has recourse only to whatever subjective lights he might "find meaningful," and it is not good taste to talk about them in public. If, however, we do express such beliefs publicly, we dare not "impose" them upon others, not even upon our own children.

According to what the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre has called the dogma of "modern emotivism," religious beliefs have to do with feelings or "values," not with facts. At most such beliefs can be tentatively recommended to others as "useful" to psychological well-being, social justice, or some other agreed-upon good. It is, after all, not as though they were *true* in anything like the sense that it is true that Paris is the capital of France. Turner does not put it quite this way, but the fatal divorce in the 19th century was between religion and truth. And it was the religious leaders of the last century who began the divorce proceedings. "[Their] lust for empirical proof proved, in the end, nothing less than disastrous for belief. After science separated iteslf from God, doubting Victorians had left, not a subtle and firmly grounded alternative, but stunted arguments and evocations of heartfulness." Instead of challenging a narrow empiricism with an alternative epistemology, religion, when it did not submit to the judgment of that empiricism, recommended itself as something other than truth in the accepted definition of the term.

Turner's indictment is comprehensive:

> The church played a major role in softening up belief. Theologians had been too unwilling to allow God to be incomprehensible, too insistent on bringing Him within the compass of mundane human knowledge, too anxious to link belief with science, too neglectful of other roads to knowledge, too insensitive to noncognitive ways of apprehending reality—too forgetful, in short, of much of their own traditions as they tried to make God up-to-date. And the leaders of the churches got away with this as long as science depended on God, as long as the new conception of knowledge that science exemplified did not reach its ultimate conclusion. But when it did, theology paid the price for ignoring the complexity of the question of God, for suppressing the transcendent mystery that was supposed to exceed human understanding. One might say that most theologians had lost faith long before any Victorian agnostics.

Without God, Without Creed is an always provocative and usually persuasive exercise in cultural and intellectual history. There is so much that one wishes for more. For one thing, it is not clear what was so distinctive in the American experience that made secularization here so very different from its more aggressive forms in most European countries. For another, the influence of figures like Marx and Nietzsche is omitted. Before the Robert Ingersolls there were those who attacked religion with apostolic fervor, whether in the name of an illusory "kingdom of freedom" or a despairing abyss of nothingness.

In other words, while the religious appeasers of a reductionist epistemology undoubtedly have much to answer for, religion was under attack before it retreated. Establishment religion might have stood more firmly by its transcendent truth claims and thereby blunted the attack, but the attack almost certainly could not have been avoided. To put it differently, it seems likely that there were actors who did not need religion to bless the ideas by which they were led to the conclusion that religion was irrelevant, or worse. The intellectual and cultural decline of religion was only partially a case of suicide.

Finally, Turner seems almost resigned to the fact that religion will continue to be, as it became for the first time in Ingersoll's day, subcultural. By this he means that, even though almost everybody in America claims to be a believer, "belief no longer functions as a unifying and defining element of that entire culture; it no longer provides a common heritage that underlies our diverse world views." As a generalization about our present situation, and about the last several decades, this statement is accurate enough. But Turner only touches upon a number of developments that might invite a different conclusion. These developments could portend a cultural shift as comprehensive as the cultural shift of the Victorian era which he describes so well. Admittedly the evidence for such a shift is not decisive; but it is more than here and

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there or now and then, and in combination it is impressive.

We can, I believe, see today a widespread collapse of confidence in the dogmas of the secular Enlightenment. Ever since World War I, and increasingly so in the age of Auschwitz, the Gulag, and the nuclear threat, belief in the inevitable progress of history has come to seem perverse, if not blasphemous. As Robert Nisbet has argued, this may have its negative consequences, but a greater sobriety about human limitations can also open the way to alternative understandings of reality.

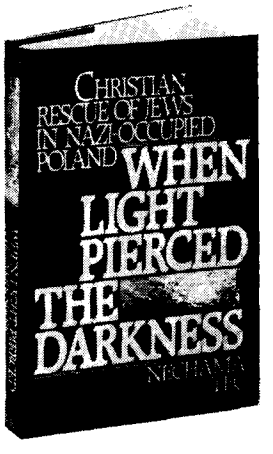
This collapse is, as it were, the negative way (*via negativa*) toward another truth, the truth to which religion witnesses. Also negatively, there is a growing recognition that law, human rights, and democratic theory require their legitimations in beliefs that can only be described as religious. More positively, with respect to the sciences—notably the cosmic sciences, biology, and what has become the metaphysics of physics—rigorous methodology is forcing a veritable outbreak of reverence, brilliantly described by Leon Kass in his *Toward a More Natural Science.*

BUT what about religion itself, which, after all, Turner chiefly blames for the bitter legacy from which we may only now be emerging? As one surveys the sectors of institutionalized religion in America, the news is not heartening. There is obviously a revival of religion (or at least of religiosity) under way, but from prestige divinity schools to television evangelists it is generally a religion pathetically determined to prove its utility for purposes that have little to do with religion, purposes which range from a more satisfying sex life to the advancement of Marxist-Leninist revolutions. And yet here too there are persons, trends, and movements pointing in more promising directions.

The continuing influence of Karl Barth, the greatest Protestant theologian of this century, should not be discounted. Nobody more adamantly posited transcendent truth against Enlightenment reductionisms, although, it must be admitted, he was sadly indifferent to the cultural tasks of religion. Today Wolfhart Pannenberg of Munich is the most influential figure bringing together Barth's commitment to the integrity of faith and an understanding of theology's role in the universal discourse of reason. Also, both Christians and Jews are paying more attention to the work of Abraham Joshua Heschel. Anticipating Turner's theme, Heschel wrote in 1966: "It is customary to blame secular science and anti-religious philosophy for the eclipse of religion in modern society. It would be more honest to blame religion for its own defeats." Heschel's conviction that theology begins with God's perception of man rather than man's perception of God stands in bracing contrast to the theological appeasers of the 19th and 20th centuries described by James Turner.

The necessarily subcultural future of belief was challenged also by the Protestant, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox theologians and ministers—I among them—who in 1975 issued the Hartford Appeal for Theological Affirmation. The appeal diagnosed the malaise of religion as deriving from a "loss of transcendence," and called upon the churches to speak a distinctively religious word to a modern world that the churches had been slavishly imitating. Ten years later, the 1985 Extraordinary Synod called by Pope Paul II examined the many "progressive" changes of the two decades past and, declaring that the Church and the world had in large part succumbed to a "loss of transcendence," called for a renewal of "mystery" in religious belief and practice. Unless the Catholic Church is completely devoid of effective leadership (which seems unlikely), the directions set out by the Synod will soon become evident in American Catholicism. As for the currently ebullient worlds of evan-

Hiding Jews: Who Helped and Why



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gelicalism and fundamentalism, it is impossible to say what their long-term impact upon American culture will be. It seems probable that it will be enormous, and it is at least possible that these movements will have learned something from the history of Protestant cultural accommodationism described by James Turner.

Without God, Without Creed may thus be too resigned about our cultural future. Still, it powerfully underscores two important truths about our past that continue into our present. First is the sheer historical and human oddity of unbelief. There was a unique moment in the history of a specific culture, our own, in which respectable people began to say out loud that they did not believe that there is a higher power or powers responsible for the universe or that this fact determines the purpose of life. That assertion appeared as a stunning novelty, but within a century it would become culturally entrenched. Now that culturally curious moment may be receding, and we are uncertain about what comes next.

This brings us to Turner's second important truth. As in the 19th century, there are Jews and Christians today who are busily trying to prove the utility or plausibility of religious faith by the criteria of the still dominant culture. They fail to see that those criteria are themselves fast becoming less usable and less plausible. The way toward a more promising future will, I expect, be found in large part by those believers who understand that the only religion that can make a difference is the religion that is different. And then, of course, when we go public with our differences, we will have to find new ways to deal with our differences in public.

Admittedly, that is a formidable prospect. But the alternative is to go on as we are, with a subcultural faith in God and creeed that, in the view of most Americans, is separated from and therefore bestows no meaning upon the culture. As a result, the culture itself seems to many of them ever less worthy of their faith and devotion.

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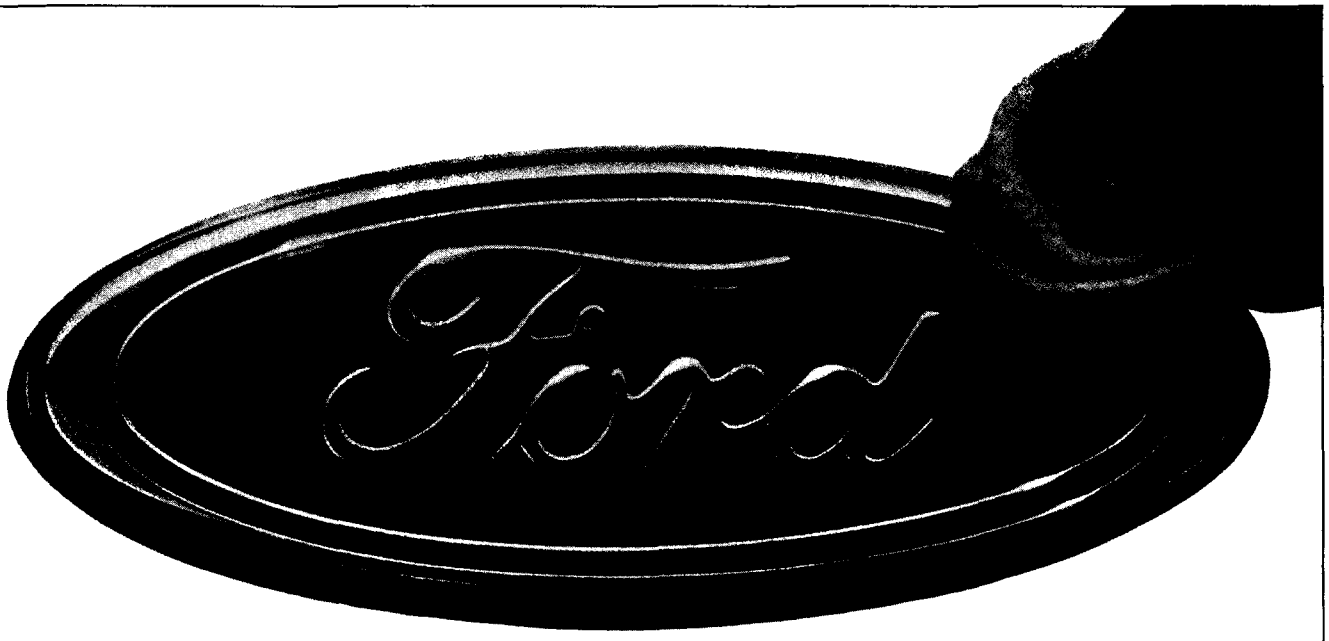

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